

# **City of Huntsville**

## **Parks Master Plan**

### **2009 Update**



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*Every City Should Have  
at its Heart,  
a Great Park...*

# Huntsville Parks and Recreation

## Master Plan 2009

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This Master Plan was created in the Fall of 2002 and updated in the Fall of 2009.



## SUMMARY

This document provides guidance for park and green space concerns in the City of Huntsville for the next 3 years. It only encompasses 3 years because it is an update of the 2002 Parks Master Plan. We plan to conduct a completely new Parks Master Plan in 2012 at the 10 year mark. This update should be used in conjunction with the Huntsville Horizon Comprehensive Plan of 2007.

Input was received from numerous citizens and citizen groups from throughout the City. Input was also received from many sources including public meetings, focus groups, Advisory Board members and City staff. Public meetings were held for input on August 20, 2009, September 14, 2009, and October 12, 2009. The first reading of this updated plan at the City Council Meeting was on October 6, 2009 which allowed for additional comments and at the October 20<sup>th</sup> Council Meeting, Council unanimously approved this updated plan.

A primary objective from inception was to garner extensive public input. Through interaction with the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, the citizens provided a “wish list.” This co-operative effort enabled the planning process to directly address goals of the City of Huntsville.

This Master Plan used the City Councils Vision, Mission and “End” statements as a foundation. Primary concern was placed on the following statements:

We will know the City of Huntsville is .....

- 1. Beautiful when....**
  - 1.1 Trees, native flora and green space are enhanced, maintained and preserved.
- 3. Culturally diverse when....**
  - 3.1.2 Opportunities exist to experience other cultures
  - 3.1.5 City sponsored/funded activities reflect the cultural diversity of the community
- 4. Affordable when.....**
  - 4.13 Funding is available for City sponsored programs for all segments of the community.
- 6. Well planned when....**
  - 6.6.1.8 When the community has amenities to retain and attract people
  - 6.6.3 Become involved in City government
  - 6.6.5 Citizens can participate in a variety of recreation, cultural, or athletic activities
  - 6.6.7 All citizens can safely enjoy the outdoor environment

The central objective of this document is to provide a comprehensive understanding of Park and Recreation Department goals, methods to achieve them and the constraints and responsibilities involved. To this end, this Plan is divided into 9 sections.

- |          |                                  |
|----------|----------------------------------|
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The population of Huntsville in 2000 was 35,078 (26,429 after subtracting TDCJ inmates) and the population of Walker County was 62,758. The 2008 estimated population for Huntsville is 37,790 (29,788 after subtracting TDCJ inmates). We have an increase of 6.2% during this time. Based on historic data, the population in 2010 is projected to be 40,866 (32,864 after subtracting TDCJ inmates and grow to 47,609 (39,607 after subtracting TDCJ inmates) by 2020.

The City is also the home of Sam Houston State University, or SHSU. The University is part of the State University System of Texas. Enrollment in 2002 was approximately 13,000 with a staff/faculty near 2500. Fall 2009 enrollment increased to 16,798. The planning process for this document included the students and professors of SHSU. This plan recognizes the students as a resource to the City and encourages improved co-operation between the City of Huntsville and SHSU.

Another significant employer is the Texas Department of Corrections (TDCJ) with nearly 6000 employees. With 5 prisons in the City limits and a total of 7 within Walker County, a constant prisoner population near 9000 inmates and numerous support offices throughout the City, TDCJ is the cornerstone of our City's employment base.

The City of Huntsville had 26 parks covering nearly 282 acres, but has increased our parks to 27 and slightly more than 288 acres. The City has 4 distinct types of parks; City, Neighborhood, Passive and Green Space. We currently have a ratio of 9.7 acres of park for each 1000 people. This plan was formulated to achieve a goal of 6 acres of "neighborhood" park per 1000 people while maintaining or decreasing Parks and Recreation maintenance costs. Currently, we have 0.95 acres of "neighborhood" park per 1000 people. Our expansion has been in "City" parks and our maintenance costs have increased. Therefore, we still have work to accomplish this goal.

The key priorities of the for the City as a result of the updated Master Plan are;

- Property Acquisition
- Green-belt linkage through a Linear Park (hiking/biking)
- Indoor Recreation Facility
- Skate Park
- Multi-Sport Complex
- Renovation of Existing Park Facilities
- Trails Master Plan

- Competition Pool Cover
- Solar Heating for Pool
- Indoor Pool Facility
- Concession Stands/Restrooms
- Outsourcing a new Master Plan for 2013

Many of the goals of the 2003 Master Plan have been realized. Below is a list.

- **Aquatic Center (Completed with Pool and Bath House)**
- **Nature Center**
- **Dog Parks (2)**
- **Disc Golf Course**
- **Extra Soccer Fields**
- **Trails**
- **Seating at Sports Fields**
- **Practice Fields (Landfill Practice Field)**
- **Restrooms added in parks**
- **Lighting added to Soccer Fields at Kate Barr Ross Park**
- **Property Acquisitions (see Table 1)**

**Table 1. Park Acquisitions**

Acres	Description and Owner:	Value (WCAD) Per Acre	Cost at Appraisal*
0.25	10 <sup>th</sup> Street west of Town Creek; L. Rolling owner		21,460
6.0	Smith Hill Road	4000	24,000
6.25	Total Land and Improvements		45,460

Specific accomplishments in each of the parks are displayed below.

Eastham-Thomason:

<b>Project:</b>	<b>Cost</b>
<b>Construction of Aquatic Center</b>	<b>\$2,300,000</b>
<b>Install cushioning materials in playgrounds</b>	<b>\$10,000</b>
<b>Off-street parking facilities</b>	<b>\$45,000</b>
<b>Trail extension 10<sup>th</sup> Street to 7<sup>th</sup> Street</b>	<b>\$75,600</b>
<b>Picnic facilities (tables, pads, trash receptacles, grills)</b>	<b>\$10,000</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,440,600</b>

Emancipation Park:

<b>Description</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>
<b>Acquire more land</b>	<b>\$6,450</b>
<b>Add water fountains and picnic areas</b>	<b>\$5,000</b>
<b>Replace existing playground fixtures with modular structure</b>	<b>\$20,000</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$31,450</b>

This Master Plan is a living document and should be a tool in park development issues for the planning horizon (3 years). This Master Plan update is a 3 year plan; however, it is scheduled to be revisited and completely redone in June 2013.

In summation, the goal of this Parks and Recreation Master Plan is to effectively recognize the park and recreation system of the City of Huntsville as a resource. Huntsville is a city teeming with natural beauty. From magnificent forests with Magnolias and Pines to native prairies overflowing with blue bonnets to beavers, otters and bald eagles, the environs surrounding Huntsville are simply beautiful. The Huntsville area is fortunate to have so many stunning and natural features. With such features, there is no need to “artificially” create beauty. Therefore, the parks of Huntsville should make the most of our natural resources and endeavor to enhance them.

# ***1 Introduction***

## **a Overview**

Community needs have been the driving force of this update to our Master Plan process. Citizens are welcome at scheduled board meetings. The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board also hosted an evening meeting in order to garner the interests, likes, and dislikes of the residents of the City. The meetings afforded Park and Recreation Advisory Board members the opportunity to interact with the public and learn more about the collective needs, and how those needs could and should be addressed by the Parks and Recreation Department. Public Meetings were held on August 20, 2009, September 14, 2009, and October 12, 2009.

## **b What is a Parks and Recreation Master Plan?**

A Parks and Recreation Master Plan is a roadmap to meeting the needs of the future by planning today. Good Parks and Recreation Master Plans function as a planning tool by comprehensively assessing current conditions, determining needs and setting measurable goals. A plan will also identify recommendations and priorities and present a schedule for their implementation. Most importantly, a Parks and Recreation Master Plan is a “living” document and should be used, reviewed and revised regularly.

Parks and green spaces need to be planned for in the same manner as roads, sewer and water infrastructure. Simply “hoping for the best” will not get the City of Huntsville the kinds of parks and green spaces that it desires. A master plan is a working document that will guide the development of City parks and green space as well as the designation, expansion and/or location of future parks and green spaces. Ultimately, a Master Plan should guide the City’s Parks and Recreation Department to more effectively allocate its resources.

Planning, by its very nature, allows a City to set goals and develop a means to measure and achieve the goals. One of the goals of this master plan is to place park and green space issues on the same level that traditional infrastructure issues have been operating at for decades. Only then will we achieve the standard of parks and green spaces that have been set forth by the Huntsville City Council.

## **c Why Parks are Important**

*Frederick Law Olmstead*, arguably one of America’s first planners and the man who designed Central Park in NY City and many others, often commented “*Every city should have at its heart a great park*”. Parks and green spaces are important for a virtually endless list of reasons. From places of beauty and fun to places of trees and

nature in its many natural forms to places of recreation, parks have a place in all our hearts.

Parks are important because they are a place of shared public interest and contact. Areas of public contact and shared space are often called the “public realm”. Parks function as part of the public realm in the form of places for; kids to learn how to play baseball, groups of people sharing a Sunday afternoon soccer match, birdwatchers enjoying wild birds, families to gather and Recreate and so many others that are vitally important in a healthy community.

Parks also serve a critical environmental role as well. Trees and plants stabilize creek banks, produce oxygen, reduce water run-off, provide shade, reduce airborne toxins, reduce the ambient temperature, host numerous plant and animal species, maintain watersheds and aquifers, and numerous other benefits. To reduce or limit park space in a growing or modestly dense city environment can have fairly serious environmental repercussions. Adequate and proper park space needs to be accounted for at all levels of development in a healthy community.

Well planned and located parks can also be useful in increasing entertainment choices for the young people of Huntsville. Good parks can provide young people an alternative to less productive activities. There are nearly 7000 school aged children in Huntsville and thousands more in nearby areas. Many of them take care of themselves and siblings after school and in the summer. Children benefit from good parks and learn to appreciate and enjoy nature.

Parks also serve a strong economic development role. As shown in the public meetings (and in the section on “Tourists), a good parks system is a main reason why people and small to medium sized businesses choose to locate (or re-locate) to certain cities. A healthy and robust park system also attracts the older segment of our society. Retiring people enjoy and use parks as much as young urban professionals, if not more. In addition, many retirees and “snowbirds” choose to relocate to cities in a warm climate with good parks. Therefore the park system of Huntsville should be ready to address the needs of today’s users and the changing demographics of the future.

Parks are an indispensable asset for their ability to be areas of participation sports and activities such as baseball, soccer, softball, swimming, disc golf and a myriad of others. Parks are where the ball diamonds, fields and pools are located. Therefore, parks are also the foundation of sport and the medium for participants to engage. Vibrant parks are also an anti-dote to the “Nintendo” generation.

*factoid*

***In the Parks survey administered to 122 HISD high school students, nearly 50% of the students reported that “video games” is their favorite and most used type of indoor entertainment.***

Parks also provide a place for a person of any age to be on a sports team, practice their back stroke, play Frisbee, see the stars and beauty of nature, meet some friends for a bar-b-que, walk a trail or sit and read a book. Quite often, any park may be performing one or all of these tasks simultaneously.

But most importantly a park is a shared social space. Parks are the places we all have in common. Parks transcend race, religion, income, language and almost everything else to provide the space for the people of a community to interact and recreate.

#### **d Strengths and Weaknesses of the Existing Parks System**

The City of Huntsville has several wonderful parks. The Parks and Recreation Department has 4 types of parks. *City* parks are very large parks and possess ball fields, pools, soccer fields and etc. *Neighborhood* parks are the most numerous, medium sized and possess limited amenities. These parks often have a play module, picnic table, open space or other facilities. *Passive* parks are minimal parks, often possess few or no amenities and usually left in a “natural” state and/or preserving natural drainage area. The fourth category is the *Green Space* parks. Green Space parks possess no amenities and are usually of poor quality or in drainage ditches. Often, these parks are the result of an obligation for a developer to provide an amount of park space per the City’s Development Code.

The City parks of Kate Barr Ross, Eastham Thomason and Emancipation Park, attract the greatest number of users. Kate Barr Ross is the most developed park in the system. Eastham-Thomason and Emancipation parks possess tremendous potential. Their respective locations, size, diversity and usefulness are ideal for further development. Eastham-Thomason clearly has the most potential of all the City’s parks and should be further developed. The previous Master Plans and the Eastham-Thomason Park Development Plan have designated this park as the “central” park of the City. This Master Plan is in concurrence with this designation and further establishes that Eastham-Thomason Park be dedicated to activities other than organized sports.

Huntsville’s 4 levels of parks:

1) City Parks:

Eastham – Thomason Park	148.25 acres
Kate Barr Ross Park	60 acres
Emancipation Park	12.65 acres
T H Ball (Josey)	<u>6 acres</u>
Total	226.90 acres

2) Neighborhood Parks:

Boettcher Mill	0.75 acres
Emma Etheridge	14.03 acres

	Forest Hills	0.60 acres
	New Addition	8.0 acres
	Pine Shadows	1.5 acres
	Pineview	2.0 acres
	Sandbrook	<u>1.3 acres</u>
Total		28.18 acres

## 3) Passive Parks:

	Bush/Miller	3.66 acres
	Founder's Spring	0.35 acres
	Gillaspie	0.35 acres
	JH Rather	1.6 acres
	Sally Gibbs	0.1 acres
	Sam Houston Statue/ State R.O.W.	12.0 acres
	Town Creek	<u>0.2 acres</u>
Total		18.26 acres

## 4) Green Space:

	Bayou Bend	2.3 acres
	Montgomery	0.64 acres
	Raven Terrace	1.0 acres
	Shady Acres	1.5 acres
	Smither Park	0.4 acres
	TC Gibbs	4.0 acres
	Westhill	2.4 acres
	Woods Addition	<u>2.5 acres</u>
Total		14.74 acres

**Strength:**

Eastham-Thomason Park.

Of the three "City Parks" Eastham – Thomason (E-T) Park clearly has the most potential. The park was similarly highlighted in the *City of Huntsville Eastham-Thomason Park Land Use and Development Plan* document of 1999. This Master Plan has incorporated numerous aspects of the report and endorses many of its findings. The reasons are as follows.

E-T Park has numerous outstanding features

## 1) Location:

Centrally located

Very close to downtown

Near the intersection of 4 TxDOT highways (SH30, SH75, SH247 and FM 2821).



2) Size:

148.25

Mostly undeveloped forest

Can accommodate large numbers of people at any given time

3) Open space:

Existing multipurpose fields and forest

Large space in NE section of park near Mesquite Street.

4) Diversity (currently):

Aquatic Center

Basketball court

Picnic areas

Play modules

Volleyball area

Prairie areas

Hiking trails

Dog Park

Disc Golf Course

Nature Center

Horseshoe Pits

5) Terrain:

Significant topographical changes

Flood plains

Numerous types of wildlife

Numerous types of plant life

Town Creek

6) Trail access:

Numerous internal trails

7) Linkage:

Linked to flood plain (beneficial for TPW grants)

Near several HISD schools

Trails to Downtown and Town Creek, Rather Parks

Centralized location for future trail to Huntsville State Park

8) Usage:

Swimming

Volleyball

Basketball

Disc Golf

Dog Park

Play module

Hikers and naturalists  
 Horseshoes  
 Miscellaneous activities (pick-up games)

These 8 points identify Eastham-Thomason (E-T) Park as a park with outstanding potential. E-T Park was not a significant force in the city, or the tourist destination it could have been, we have made tremendous strides toward fulfilling the goals of this Master Plan. The Advisory Board has long recognized the potential of E-T Park and has reflected that in this Master Plan.

Special consideration has been given to E-T Park with regards to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) \$500,000 Outdoor Recreation Grant program. The points identified above were crucial in choosing E-T Park as the center of the TPW grant application. E-T Park was selected as the location for the addition of an aquatic center. The aquatic center is located on the site of the former SW Bell building located on Avenue N.

The proximity of E-T Park to the downtown (Huntsville is a “Main Street” City) of Huntsville strongly suggest that the linkage be much more highly developed. Properly developed, the downtown and E-T Park could each benefit from the other. In the world of economics this is known as agglomeration. Agglomeration occurs when individual businesses locate in an area near other mutually beneficial businesses. E-T Park, being near the downtown, makes the two individual entities much stronger. Shoppers can easily become “parkers” and “parkers” can easily become shoppers. With the addition of trails and walk/bike paths through a linear park, this will become more advantageous for shoppers and park goers.

A more fully developed E-T park could attract people from outlying areas and foster economic development in the city. E-T Park is becoming the “Heart of the City”.

For Eastham-Thomason Park to reach its potential, the following 4 items need to be addressed:

- 1) Increased trail system linkages through a linear park.
- 2) Improved signage, maintenance and safety.
- 3) Additional lighting.
- 4) A well designed Skate Park should be established.

## e Tourists

The City of Huntsville, Mainstreet and the Chamber of Commerce have been diligently working for years to increase the number of visitors/tourists to Huntsville. A significant amount of local business originates from tourists/visitors. The Parks and Recreation Department and the Advisory Board view parks and recreation as a part of attracting visitors to the city *and* a “reason” for retaining Sam Houston State students over the weekends and summers.

Quality parks attract visitors and retain students. An increase of tourists/visitors to the city has a very positive effect on the local economy because of purchases of food, gas, clothes, hotels/motels, etc. Their spending has a “multiplier” effect within the city’s economy. The sales tax revenues from increased sales are returned to the City which, in turn, reinvests that money back into the city in the form of parks, streets, libraries, cultural services improvements and other functions.

The more tourists/visitors we attract the more income the City earns and reinvests into the City. Large groups of visitors in Huntsville to attend a tournament will provide a dramatic financial impact for areas businesses. Many restaurants and other businesses are thrilled to report doubling and tripling of clients during tournament times. They only wished it happened more often.

Tournaments can provide a tremendous source of revenue. Many tournaments draw dozens of teams, hundreds of participants and sometimes thousands of visitors/supporters. These numbers translate into increased local sales, sales tax, and Hotel/Motel tax revenues. Therefore, the various sports organizations should be encouraged to host tournaments with a preset amount of “profits” going back into the field or facility. The possibility of earning money for one’s group may motivate the user groups to host more tournaments and thus provide a mutually beneficial economic impact on the Park and Recreation Department and the city as a whole.



## 2 Goals for the Master Plan

### a Comprehensive goals

The goals for the Parks and Recreation Master Plan were established by combining 3 central elements operating within the City;

- 1 City Council's "Vision and Mission Statements" (see appendix: City of Huntsville)
- 2 City Council's "End Statements" (see appendix: City of Huntsville)
- 3 Increased Citizen Participation

The aforementioned elements provided a centralized foundation from which to approach the master plan process and this update. The Vision and Mission Statement describe the kind of city Huntsville is determined to be. The "End Statements" describe the manner in which we will know that we have accomplished our Vision. Grounded in these statements are *setting goals* and establishing a means of *measuring* the progress. The Huntsville Parks and Recreation Master Plan update 2009 will complete the process by describing the "How-to" statements in the form of "Specific goals". These how-to statements will identify the manner and methods to accomplish the Vision, Mission and End Statements.

A key objective undertaken by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board was to look at the Huntsville Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2003 as a "new" document and not merely an update of the existing Master Plan. This goal was achieved by addressing the needs, wants and resources of the city in a comprehensive manner. The fragmenting of numerous aspects of the Parks and Recreation Department services, goals, users and resources has strained the ability of the Department to deliver its services efficiently within an ever-tightening operating budget. The objective of this document is to comprehensively assess the needs and goals of the public and how the Parks and Recreation Department can effectively meet those needs now and into the future.

In summation, the objective of this Master Plan update is to effectively recognize the park system and recreational programming of the City of Huntsville as a resource. Huntsville is a city teeming with natural beauty. From magnificent forests with Magnolias and Pines to native prairies overflowing with blue bonnets to beavers, otters and bald eagles, the area surrounding Huntsville is simply beautiful. The Huntsville area is fortunate to have so many beautiful and natural features. With such features, there is no need to "artificially" create beauty. Therefore, the parks of Huntsville should make the most of our natural resources and endeavor to enhance them.

# Every City Should Have at its Heart, a Great Park

## **Recommendation:**

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan recommends that a sub-committee composed of Parks and Recreation Advisory Board members and City Staff persons prepare a detailed “User Fee” analysis. The analysis should seek win-win methods to fairly address costs and to foster mutually beneficial co-operative agreements. Some of the other goals of the analysis will be to:

- 1 Determine operating costs for each park and service
- 2 Assess user(s) and related costs
- 3 Determine fair and appropriate “Cost Sharing Agreements” and/or daily use fees
- 4 Re-evaluate the City’s policy regarding tournaments, corporate sponsorship, concessions and revenues
- 5 County participation
- 6 Monitor progress and make adjustments

The Advisory Board comprehends the economic force of tournaments and is in favor of hosting more tournaments. An appropriate amount of responsibility from numerous user groups (Baseball, softball, swimming, etc) needs to be established. Responsibility includes financial and/or physical. The various user groups should be charged appropriately for certain services (such as lights and maintenance) and/or be required to maintain their respective areas. To offset any financial impact user fees would have on a group or organization, groups should be encouraged to host tournaments and meets with revenues retained by their non-profit group. This relationship should prove to be mutually beneficial for fostering more tournaments and attracting more tourists/visitors to Huntsville. The Advisory Board has made recommendations to the City Council and some user fees have been adopted. But, this is a continual process that is reassessed yearly.

The Parks and Recreation Department is responsible for all park operating and maintenance expenditures. As more parks, game lights, pool heaters, etc. are added to City Parks (in the next 3 years), the more money will be required for operating and maintenance. The implementation of user fees is an effective method to help reduce costs. User fees are most productive when applied to baseball, soccer, softball and swimming user groups. Therefore, to continue providing quality services and facilities into the future, a fair and affordable fee or cost sharing agreement has been determined and implemented to begin placing increased responsibility upon the appropriate users.

For example, a new residential development on a 10 acre tract of land is required to dedicate 1 acre of the tract to “Park”. Often, the land dedicated for “park” is of low quality and difficult to access. When the City accepts the “park” into City possession, the Parks and Recreation Department must begin maintaining it.

### ***3 Plan Development Process***

#### ***a Visioning Process***

Throughout the process, Advisory Board members and the public were encouraged to consider the needs of future generations as well as of those today. They were both presented with current needs information and projected population increases in the planning horizon.

All participants were encouraged to think big and small. The intent was to include participation for a broad spectrum of issues. The public meetings that were held to gather input were productive.

#### ***b Planning Process***

The planning process for this Master Plan in 2003 was a departure from methods of the past. The intent of this plan was to outreach as much as possible and involve as many people and groups as possible. We continued this process for the 2009 update.

One of the early identified goals for the Master Plan was to increase the amount of citizen participation. The goal was to involve, inform and encourage the public to be a part of the planning process from the inception. The City of Huntsville is divided into 4 political Wards. For the 2003 Master Plan, a public meeting was scheduled individually for each Ward and held at City Hall. Facilitating individual Ward meetings helped increase the awareness of Wards to the general public and afforded the public multiple opportunities to comment. Individual meetings concentrated the discussions to specific regions within the city. For the update, we held public meeting at City Hall.

Upon conclusion of the “Ward” meetings the “Special Interests” meetings began. The Special Interest work sessions were a set of 4 meetings scheduled to individually address the specific needs of various park users.

The schedule – 2002 -2003: \*

Nov. 14      Ward 1

Nov. 19	Ward 2
Dec. 5	Ward 3
Dec. 12	Ward 4
Dec. 19	Active Play Work Session
Jan. 9	Special Interest Work Session
Jan. 16	Organized Sport Work Session
Jan. 23	Facilities Work Session

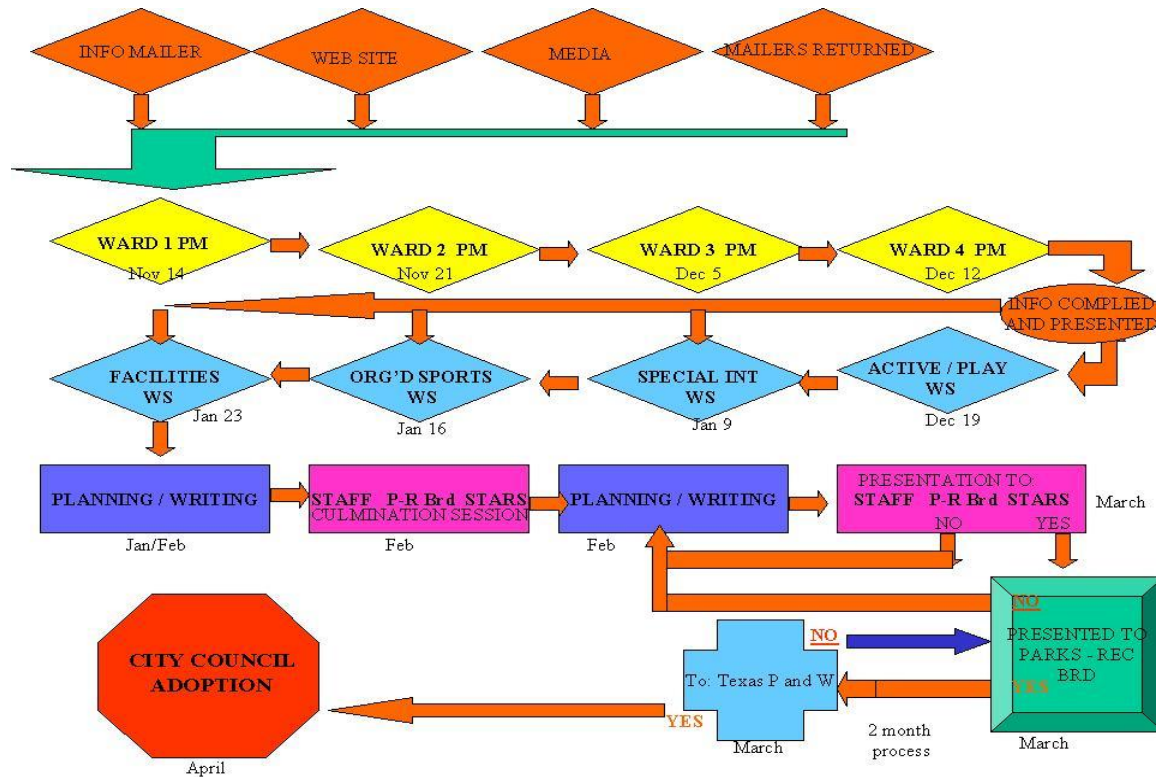
\* A separate meeting was also held for the organized sports team leaders.

Each of the 8 public meetings was structured in a similar manner. The planning process, reasons, schedules and information were presented via a PowerPoint demonstration. Paper copies were also distributed as was a “Park-use” survey. Upon completion of the staff presentation, an opportunity for the public to dialog with the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board was held. These discussions were recorded and were invaluable in attaining precise information from the public. Some of the meetings went late into night, but were always informative.

A group of volunteers was formed to facilitate citizen participation and the progress of the Master Plan. The Advisory Board asked for 1 or 2 volunteers at each meeting. The group represented their respective Wards and special interests groups. The group came to be known as the “All-stars”. The All-stars met on 5 occasions and were invaluable in the prioritizing process.

The process for involving the public began at the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board meeting in October of 2002. At that meeting plans were presented for citizen participation, scheduling, goals, deadlines, and completion. City staff released the same information to the local newspaper, *The Huntsville Item*. An informative front page article was printed on Wednesday October, 23<sup>rd</sup> of 2002. Additional news coverage was provided by the Huntsville Item on the front page of numerous editions of the paper. Students from SHSU TV aired several stories informing students and public about upcoming meetings. Public Service Announcements (PSAs) regarding Parks and Recreation Master Plan public meetings were produced and aired on local radio station KSAM.

For the update, Public meetings were held for input on August 20, 2009, September 14, 2009, and October 12, 2009. The first reading of this updated plan at the City Council Meeting was on October 6, 2009 which allowed for additional comments and at the October 20<sup>th</sup> Council Meeting, Council unanimously approved this updated plan. All meeting had postings in City Hall and some were aired on KSAM.



2003 Plan Process

## 4 Area Facility Concepts and Standards

### a Recreation Facility Guidelines and Needs

The Master Plan of 1997 conducted adult surveys as did the Plan of 2003. Both surveys attempted to gain a basic understanding of the citizen's views, wants and needs related to city parks. In order to have an effective measurement of trend changes from 1997 to 2003, the 2003 survey was worded nearly identical to that of the 1997 survey.

Each survey had 10 distinct categories which were evaluated. The instrument measured attendance of the "Top Ten" parks, the quality of those parks, maintenance, age of the respondent, feelings regarding the parks, "Top Ten" indoor and outdoor activities, residence, and would support a tax increase for additional recreational activities.

The survey of 1997 had a response rate of 277 respondents, and 122 respondents in the 2003 survey. Despite the difference of "n", or number of respondents between the two surveys, the responses were relatively similar and consistent.

There was enough conclusive evidence presented by the survey to confirm particular trends over the past five years. The most notable trend was the increase in interest related to swimming. Swimming moved to the number 1 position among top ten



outdoor activities with a score of 49%. In the previous survey of 1997, swimming ranked sixth among top ten outdoor activities with a 25% approval rating. Since 2003, with funding from TPW, Huntsville has built an Aquatic Center and completed this goal.

Inline skating and skate boarding emerged as fourth among outdoor activities with 36% of the respondents in 2003. The previous survey of 1997 did not report rollerblading and skating on the top ten lists of outdoor activities. This remains an important goal in 2009.

Fewer significant trend changes were observed among the top ten indoor activities compared to outdoor activities. The most significant trend was the increased interest that citizens had in video games. In 1997 video games were ranked fourth and scored 22% of the respondents. In 2003, video games were the number 1 most desired indoor activity among the respondents, with a score of 48%.

When evaluating the trend changes that occurred among the “Top Ten” parks, three parks made significant changes. The parks of Kate Barr Ross, Emancipation and Eastham Thomason were identified as those parks. In 1997 and in 2003 Kate Barr Ross rated number 1 among the “Top Ten” parks of the city, and had an increase in support of 27%. In 1997, Emancipation and Eastham Thomason parks were ninth and tenth respectively, while in 2003 Emancipation and Eastham Thomason both failed to make the top ten list.

Overall the survey allowed the City of Huntsville to evaluate trend changes that occurred over the past five years. While the methodology was less than perfect, it provided significant information and was extremely valuable.

This Plan recommends the follow-up of this “demand-based” approach in the next Master Plan. Trends should be identified and interpreted.

The Citizen input into this update did show an increase in desires to have more walking/bike trails. Included in this was a linear park that linked Eastham Thomason park with downtown and beyond. The desire is to have a bike trail through the city to Highway 19 and beyond.

## **b    Recommended Recreation Services**

### **1       Intergovernmental Agreements**

Huntsville is blessed with a substantial and well managed school district and a state university lending prestige (and facilities) to the area. Unfortunately, in many cities having these same assets government has chosen up sides and built empires. School facilities are “reserved” and not accessible to the very taxpayers who paid for their construction. Universities become cities unto themselves with imaginary city limits lines that non-students are not permitted to transgress. Our interviews with school district and university officials have shown that this is

certainly not the case in Huntsville, in fact, quite the opposite is true. We found a willingness to cooperate already exists between school, university, and city administrators that need to be “fleshed” out. Here is an explanation of the current status:

a. Huntsville ISD policy on use of facilities:

- Outdoor facilities are open to the public when not in conflict with school district use.
- Reservations are available through the athletic director for outdoor facilities. There are no fees for this use.
- Indoor use:
  - Indoor play areas at elementary schools are not opened to the public with the exception that “prime-time” after-school programs through the YMCA are permitted. The HISD Receives \$1.00 per student per day for this service.
  - The district rents space to non-profit organizations at \$75 a day for first 5 days and \$50 a day thereafter plus a fee for janitorial services.
  - The Louis D. Davis Gym is rented for \$200 for the first 4 hours plus the lessor pays a janitor. The new gym at Huntsville Intermediate, completed in 1995, is not rented.
  - The old gym at the Middle School is rented under the same terms as the Louis G. Davis Gym when it is available.
  - The new gym at Huntsville Middle School, also completed in 1995, is not rented.
  - There are two gyms at the High School. The gyms rent for \$300 for the first 4 hours and \$150 per hour after that.

b. Recommendations on Facility Joint Use Agreements with HISD

- Such an agreement would have to provide sufficient revenues to the district to recoup electrical, janitorial, and other ongoing maintenance costs.
- The agreement would have provisions or major expenditures to be shared equitably for floor refinishing, upgrading security or other capital outlay.
- Any agreement would have to be in writing, approved by administrators and elected officials on all sides.

Since 2003, the City and HISD have entered into an interlocal agreement for use of the basketball courts, baseball and softball fields. This has been beneficial to all residents but with the increase in population, there remains a need for more courts and fields.

c. Current Sam Houston State University policy on facility use:

- Health and Kinesiology Building is largely restricted on a day-to-day basis to students, faculty, and staff who in the aggregate make up about 1/3 of

the City's population of over 34,000. Rental of the facilities for tournaments or leagues is permitted under a sliding scale for number of gyms, hours, etc. Free play by the public is not permitted.

- University sports fields and playfields are available to the public when not used for university recreation or physical education needs. If a field is "reserved" in advance there is a nominal charge (about \$15 for 2 hours without lights). If not reserved, there is no fee. Students use fees and not direct public tax dollars pay for ball fields and playfields.
- Pritchett Field and track is open to the public.

d. Recommendations on Facility Joint Use Agreements with SHSU:

The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, and SHSU staff believe joint use agreements between the City and SHSU are clearly needed under the right circumstances:

- Any joint use agreement would have to provide sufficient revenues to recoup electrical, janitorial, and other ongoing maintenance costs.
- This agreement would have to have provisions for major expenditures to be shared equitably for floor refinishing, upgrading security or other capital outlay.
- Any agreement would have to be in writing, approved by boards and councils on all sides.
- A designated Park & Recreation official should coordinate these agreements and the administration of their terms.

e. Recommendations on Future Facilities Joint Use:

Recreation centers to provide basketball/volleyball and similar court space will *start* at \$1.0 million each plus land and operating costs. Bond issues will cost taxpayers 1.2 cents per hundred dollars valuation to finance the construction cost of one gym based and 1.8 cents per hundred for operations and maintenance on 7% interest rates on a \$1.0 million bond issue for 20 years. *Debt service alone will cost \$7,750 per month for each gym.* A Sports Complex is currently beginning the concept phase to provide more courts and ball fields.

## 2 Expanded Programming

The Parks & Recreation Board recommends enhancement in the *programming* aspect of Parks and Recreation as strongly as we recommend the hardware (play field) in this master plan. The park superintendent is charged with renovation and maintenance of city parks. Programming is not maintenance and construction. Programming involves coordination of multiple users who want to use limited numbers of facilities along with

putting together special events like “Hoop-It-Up®”, trail runs/walks, bike-a-thons, aerobics and crafts fairs.

The City has hired a full-time Recreation Coordinator and provides limited programs. Expanding the outdoor programs for children is one of the priorities for the Coordinator. Additionally, a walking club has begun to encourage outdoor fitness. This is limited due to limited walking paths.

a. League organization

The City of Huntsville does not administer any sport league function. Sport leagues contract separately with the City for schedules and availability. The job is complicated further by the number of leagues of various groups and gender and the lack of facilities generally.

Changing the way sport leagues are run in Huntsville could be problematic. After all, youth leagues have had a life, politics and finances all their own. Leagues can and are frequently formed at the city level. Registration fees are paid to the City, rosters are maintained by the City, umpires are hired by the City, and schedules are coordinated including rainouts, postponements, and tournaments.

The absence of a substantial adult league program in any sport is partly attributable to assignment of responsibility to volunteers and productive management throughout the year.

### 3 Appropriate Staffing

Programming enhancements bring about a demand for more facilities, a demand we know already exist in Huntsville. More facilities will obviously mean more staff for maintenance of parks, sport fields, swimming pools, recreation centers, and other outdoor facilities. The present staff cannot keep up with the existing demands let alone new ones. This does not include the use of the Parks Department to develop new trails, playgrounds, nature centers, etc. National staffing levels average 1 person per 11 acres of park land. This would result in 26 park staff. We currently employ 15 full-time and 4 part-time. In order to supplement this understaffing, we are utilizing offender labor provided by Texas Department of Criminal Justice.

The Advisory Board foresees the impending challenges of our Parks Department. They have repeatedly advocated that the Park and Recreation Department be better represented in the City’s fiscal budget process. As the City grows, related increases in the Parks and Recreation budget must be allocated. The City faces imminent deficits in park facilities. An appropriate amount of resources must be available for the Department for the planning horizon.

# Every City Should Have at its Heart, a Great Park

## **c Park Identification and National Trends**

The following data indicates standardized information for park needs as related to population. These are not mandatory standards, but act as a guiding source with which to measure. The following “standard-based” approach is a common measuring tool for cities nation-wide.

### **National Parks and Recreation Association Standards:**

<b><u>Facility</u></b>	<b><u>Goals for urban areas</u></b>
Basketball court .....	1 court per 5000 population
Football Field .....	1 field per 4,000 population
Soccer Field .....	1 field per 4,000 population
Picnic Shelter .....	1 shelter per 2,000 population
Picnic Table .....	1 table per 125 population
Ball Diamond .....	1 diamond per 1,500 population
Tennis Court.....	1 court per 1,500 population
Handball Court.....	1 court per 5,000 population
Playground .....	1 playground per 1,000 population
Swimming Pool.....	800 sq. ft. per 1,000 population
Wading Pool.....	1 pool per 5,000 population
Ice Skating Rink.....	1 rink per 50,000 population
Multi-Use Trails.....	1 mile per 3,000 population
Hiking Trails .....	1 mile per 4,000 population
Nature or Interpretive Trail.....	1 mile per 2,500 population
Bicycle Trail.....	1 mile per 2,600 population
Jogging Trail .....	1 mile per 2,000 population

Exercise Trail .....	1 mile per 7,500 population
Multi-use court.....	1 court per 3,000 population
Volley ball court .....	1 court per 3,000 population
Golf Course (9 or 18).....	1 course per 25,000 population

## Huntsville Park System Inventory \*

Park Name	Park Type	Acreage	Level of	Restrooms	Pavilions	Picnic Areas	Play Modules	Open Play	Nature Trail	Jogging/Walk	Basketball	Soccer Fields	Baseball Fields	Tennis Courts	Volleyball	Swimming	Parking Spaces	Public Art	Other
Bayou Bend	G	2.27	M				Y	Y											
Bush Miller	P	3.66	L			Y			Y	Y									
Eastham-Thomason	C	150	H	Y		Y	2	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	P		Y		50		
Emancipation	C	10.4	M	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y			2	P	P				40 - 50		
Emma Etheredge	N	1.29	M			Y	Y												
Forest Hills	N	0.624	M			Y	Y	Y									10		
Founders	P	0.688	M														5		Fount.
Gibbs	P	4.09	L			Y													
Gillaspie	P	0.258	L		Y		Y		Y								5		
New Addition	N	2 +/-	M			Y		Y			Y	Y							
Pine Shadows	N	0.95	M			Y	Y												
Pineview	N	1.91	M			Y	Y												
J. H. Rather	P	0.573	M			Y											Y		
Raven Terrace	G	2.21	L																
Kate Barr Ross	C	29.79	H	Y	Y	Y	Y					Y	Y			Y	Y		
Sandbrook	N	1.6	M			Y	Y												
Smither	P	0.35	L			Y												Y	
Town Creek	N	0.181	H		Y			Y	Y	Y							60		Theater
T.H. Ball (Josey)	C	6	H	Y		Y	Y				Y		Y					Y	
Elks	G	0.27	L																
West Hill	G	2.46	L																

\* Legend for Table on next page.

**Summary:**

Type	Quantity	Acres
<u>C</u> ity	4	226.90
<u>N</u> eighborhood	14	20.44
<u>P</u> assive	6	5.95
<u>G</u> reen Space	3	2.73

**KEY**

C - City	H - High
N - Neighborhood	M - Moderate
P - Passive	L - Low/Difficult
G- Green Space	

The Parks and Recreation Department currently operates 3 different levels of park service;

- 1 High/Constant Parks requiring continued maintenance and/or preparations for game, practice or general use.
- 2 Moderate/Regular Parks requiring regular maintenance such as mowing or trimming on a predictable schedule.
- 3 Low/Sporadic/Difficult Parks requiring relatively infrequent, yet sometimes difficult service because of the location, terrain or features of the park. These parks are often drainage areas or very small areas. They are also very time consuming, and therefore expensive to maintain.





## **5 Park Inventory**

### **a Development Code**

Park space is acquired in many ways. The City may purchase an area, receive a donation from a citizen or group or require space per the Development Code. Quite often donations and purchases have ‘restrictions’ placed upon the land. To fully understand how *some* parks come to be, a copy of the Development Code has been attached for your review. Some of these standards need to be revised to accommodate for growth, sprawl, greenbelts and park dedications.

It is the goal of this Master Plan to reduce or keep constant the number of “Low/Difficult” acreages maintained by the Parks Department for the planning horizon.

Regarding “Park-Land Dedication, the current (as of May, 2003) City of Huntsville Development Codes states:

12-10

#### **1203. PARKS, PLAYGROUNDS AND OPEN SPACE AREAS**

##### **1203.1 Dedication**

The developer of residential lots shall dedicate land for park uses at locations designated in the comprehensive plan or otherwise where such dedications are appropriate at a rate of one (1) acre per one hundred (100) dwelling units or ten percent (10%) of the total development (as shown on the preliminary plat) whichever is less up to a maximum of six (6) acres dedicated for park and Recreational purposes. A maximum of fifty percent (50%) of the dedicated area may be dedicated as open space. The developer may dedicate the area in stages if the development contains two or more phases. The developer shall show the area marked on the final plat as DEDICATED FOR PARK, OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PURPOSES.

##### **1203.2 Money instead of Land**

(1) Variance required The Planning Commission may grant a variance from the requirement to provide parkland at the time of preliminary plat approval if the Commission determines that the dedication of park land, as required in Section 1203.1, is an undue hardship on the development or that the tract size is inadequate for park and/or Recreational purposes and a park site is available within one-half (1/2) mile of the development. Where the Commission grants a variance, the developer shall deposit with the City, before final plat approval, a cash payment instead of land dedication. The developer shall deposit with the City a sum of money equal to the current assessed value of the required park land in the development according to the Walker County Appraisal



District based on the prorated amount of land required for the proposed park in Section 1203.1.

(2) Neighborhood Park and Recreation Improvement Fund Such deposit shall be placed in a Neighborhood Park and Recreation Improvement Fund established by the City Council. With City Council approval, the City shall use the deposit for improvement and/or acquisition of a neighborhood park, playground or Recreation area. With City Council approval, the City shall use the deposit for facilities that will be actually available to and benefit the persons in said development and be located within one-half (1/2) mile of the development. If, within eighteen (18) months, the City has not purchased the land for a neighborhood park, playground or Recreation area or improved an existing facility within one-half (1/2) mile of the development, the City shall reimburse the developer the full cash payment made instead of land dedication.

### 1203.3 Quality of park site

The developer may, with concurrence of the Planning Commission, make extensive improvements or provide Recreational facilities as desired. The developer shall dedicate land for Recreation purposes of a character and location suitable for use as a playground, playfield, or for other Recreation purposes. The Recreation site shall be relatively level and dry with a total frontage on one (1) or more streets of at least two hundred (200) feet in depth and no other dimension of the site shall be less than one hundred (100) feet in depth. The developer, with the Commission's permission, may locate the tract at a suitable place on the periphery of the development, so a more usable tract will result when additional park land is obtained when adjacent land is developed.

### 1203.4 Open space

The developer may dedicate open space areas in partial fulfillment of the requirements in Section 1203.1. Open space shall include all land and water dedicated as a means to conserve land and other natural resources or for historic or scenic purposes not required to be dedicated elsewhere. Areas dedicated for open space uses may include, but not be limited to, sites that:

- (1) present existing or potential hazards such as earth slippage or subsidence or other geological hazards;
- (2) may be in danger of flooding from storm-water runoff;
- (3) preserve or protect scenic sites;
- (4) provide a buffer between incompatible land uses.

### 1203.5 Credit for private parks and Recreational areas.

If the developer provides private open space for park and Recreational purposes and such space is to be privately owned and maintained by the future residents of the development, such areas shall be credited against the requirement of dedication for park and Recreational land provided that the following standards are met:

- (1) that yards, court areas, setbacks and other open spaces required in developments are not included in the computation of such private open spaces;
- (2) that the private ownership and maintenance of the open space is adequately provided for by written agreement; and
- (3) that the use of the private open space is restricted for park and Recreational purposes by Recorded covenants that run with the land in favor of the future owners of property within the development.



## **b    Park Inventory and “Specific Recommendations”**

The following “Inventory” of City of Huntsville parks has had only minor changes from the Master Plan of 2003. The parks are displayed by Ward. Specific suggestions per each park have been included.

In general, most of the parks are in very good condition. However, some parks are in need of serious work. Much of the work need is “cosmetic” and could significantly enhance the appearance and usability of the park. Several parks are in need of basic maintenance, minor under-brushing and minor repairs. Once these repairs have been made the parks will show an instant improvement. They will also become safer and more user-friendly.

The installation of well-placed “Emergency Call-boxes” (9-1-1 telephones) throughout most of Huntsville’s parks should be further investigated. These phones can increase safety within a park. Lighting near trails may need to be considered as well.

**Neighborhood Park Land Needs 2002 through 2010:**

The following table depicts the distribution of Neighborhood parks throughout the City. All “City” parks have been removed from the table to more accurately demonstrate the needs of “Neighborhood”, “Passive”, and “Green Space” parks.



E-T Park

Parks	2002 Population	2010 Projected Population	2002 Park Land (Acres)	Projected Park land needs based on a goal of 2 acres per 1000 people	Total Additional Acres Needed by 2010
Ward 1	6266	7766	11.1	15	4
Ward 2	6820	8320	6.9	16	9
Ward 3	6281	7781	5.5	15	9
Ward 4**	6562	8062	1.8	20	18
City Total	26429 *	32000*	25.3	66	40

\* Excludes TDCJ inmates

\*\* Elkins Lake represents roughly 90% of Ward 4 and has their own recreation area. (see: Section 5-a for details). The numbers shown for Ward 4 are estimates after excluding Elkins Lake.

The table above has removed the 4 “City” parks (Eastham-Thomason, Emancipation, Kate Barr Ross and Josey) from the tabulations to better demonstrate the relationship of

the Neighborhood parks to the general population. *City* parks currently represent 89% of all parks in Huntsville. *Neighborhood* parks totaled only 3%, *Passive* 2%, and *Green Space* also totaled 3%.

Neighborhood parks are of extreme importance. They provide the amenities that growing neighborhoods need for recreation. The current lack of sufficient Neighborhood park acreage will only become more pronounced throughout the planning horizon. The projected population of 2010 (excluding TDCJ inmates) will require by, National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) standards and factoring for Elkins Lake, 66 acres of Neighborhood park acreage. We currently have 7.16 acres, or 11% of NRPA standards.

The graph below demonstrates a park size inventory matrix:.

Table 5-2

**Classification and Acres**

Parks	City	Neighbor hood	Mini - Passive	Green Space
Ward 1				
Bayou Bend				2.27
Bush Miller			3.66	
Gibbs			4.09	
Forest Hills		0.624		
Kate Barr Ross	29.79			
Town Creek		0.181		
JH Rather		0.573		
Total = 41.2 acres	29.79	1.32	7.75	2.27
Ward 2				
Emma Etheredge		1.29		
Pine Shadow		0.95		
West Hill				2.46
Smither			0.35	
Pine View		2.24		
Thomas Henry Ball (Josey Park)	6.00			
Total = 11.05	6.00	2.24	0.35	2.46
Ward 3				
Eastham Thomason	150.00			
Raven Terrace				2.21
Emancipation	10.40			
New Addition		2 +/-		
Gillaspie			0.258	
Founders			0.688	
Total = 165.5	160.40	2 +/-	0.95	2.21
Ward 4				
Sand-brook		1.60		
Elks				0.27
Total = 1.8	0.00	1.60	0.00	0.27
Total Acres	196.19	7.16	9.05	7.21
Percentage	89%	03%	04%	03%
Developed	212.4			
			Total	219.61

## c Park Costs

Using Tables **5-1** and **5-2** as a reference point it becomes somewhat easy to begin assigning maintenance and staffing costs to the 4 “types” of park and the relative “Level of Service” requirements.

To determine current O/M (operating and maintenance ) costs:

(196 City park acres ) =Costs Per Acre (**CPA-C**)  
(O/M costs of City parks)

(7.16 Neighborhood park acres ) =Costs Per Acre (**CPA-N**)  
(O/M costs of N’hood parks)

(9.5 Passive park acres ) =Costs Per Acre (**CPA-P**)  
(O/M costs of Passive parks)

(7.21 Green Space park acres ) =Costs Per Acre (**CPA-GS**)  
(O/M costs of Green Space parks)

Whenever a park is added to the City or expanded its O/M costs can be clearly determined and factored into budgetary decisions. For example, if 5 acres of Neighborhood park were added to the City, the costs would be calculated as follows:

5 (acres) multiplied by **CPA-N** = \$ XXX. This increase in O/M must be factored into yearly budget figures to “keep-up” with the new acreage. This formula will prove extremely useful as the City transgresses into the “Synergen” computer program that tracks work costs, materials, schedules and more.

## 6 Needs Assessment and Identification

### a Park Identification and Needs

The following table depicts current and projected needs for park space and facilities. This chart should be used and updated throughout the planning horizon. Park deficiencies should be addressed whenever new park space is dedicated to the City of Huntsville due to purchase, donation or as required for a new residential subdivision.

The following chart was calculated using Huntsville data of: 2003 population = 26,429 and 32,000 projected for 2010. These data exclude TDCJ inmate populations.

The 5 items below (marked in **YELLOW**) indicate a severe shortage of facilities. At the bottom of the chart are total acreages per park type.

**Table 6-1**

<b>Facility</b>	<b>Currently</b>	<b>NPRA Standards</b>	<b>Needed by 2010</b>
<b>Basketball</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Football Field</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Soccer Field</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Picnic Shelter</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Picnic Table</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>250</b>
<b>Ball Diamond</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Tennis Court</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Handball Court</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Playground</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Swimming Pool</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Wading Pool</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Multi-Use Trails</b>	<b>2.5 miles</b>	<b>8.6 miles</b>	<b>10 miles</b>
<b>Hiking Trails</b>	<b>2 miles</b>	<b>6.5 miles</b>	<b>7.75 miles</b>
<b>Nature Trail</b>	<b>7 miles</b>	<b>10 miles</b>	<b>12 miles</b>
<b>Bicycle Trail</b>	<b>1 mile</b>	<b>10 miles</b>	<b>12 miles</b>
<b>Jogging Trail</b>	<b>1/4 mile</b>	<b>13 miles</b>	<b>17 miles</b>
<b>Exercise Trail</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3.4 miles</b>	<b>4 miles</b>
<b>Volley ball court</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Golf Course (9 or 18)</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1.2</b>
<b>In acres:</b>			
<b>City Park</b>	<b>65 *</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Neighborhood Park</b>	<b>7.16</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>Passive</b>	<b>9.05</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>24</b>

\*This number represents the 3 City parks plus 20 acres of non-forested Eastham Thomason Park.

It is very unlikely that a new City park will be built before 2010, nor should one. With little more than 7 acres total, the City has a significant deficit regarding Neighborhood parks. The current number translates to ¼ of an acre per 1000 people. The standards set by the National Recreation and Park Association recommends at least 2 acres of Neighborhood park per 1000 people. As shown above the City of Huntsville has a deficit of 45 acres of Neighborhood parks per the NRPA standards. Future park acquisitions or developments should endeavor to reduce this significant deficit.

## **b User Fee Analysis**

The numerous and varied demands placed upon the City are enormous. City Departments around the nation are struggling to provide quality services with limited or



diminishing budgets and Huntsville is no exception. Huntsville, like many cities, must face the challenge of *doing more with less*. The Huntsville Parks and Recreation Department must do more with less.

One of the primary objectives of this Master Plan was to provide a means of *increasing* the quantity and quality of services and facilities within an under-funded budget. Like many other City Departments, the Parks and Recreation Department must develop means to decrease costs and increase revenues. The Department should anticipate and prepare for increased park demands for the planning horizon (5 years) of this Master Plan. The current and future challenges presented to the Department for the planning horizon are significant. However, new challenges yield new approaches to meeting the challenge. The Advisory Board understands and is ready to meet, the challenges of the years ahead.

Each Advisory Board member is steadfast in their commitment to effectively and sustainably provide and maintain a high level of Park and Recreation services and facilities to all citizens of Huntsville. They have discussed the future demands and the role of the Parks and Recreation Department at length and have made numerous recommendations. One of the most pressing recommendations made was the determination that “user fees” need to be established or revised.

*Here’s why:*

Throughout this planning process the issue of “costs and access” has been repeatedly discussed. Several sports organizations have virtually “staked and claimed” certain facilities throughout the City as their own and not open to the public. Other groups occupy large blocks of time at a given facility and in doing so, close the facility to the public while paying little, if anything, to the City. In fact, their actions usually initiate an excessive amount of maintenance work and expenses. These types of expenses need to be re-examined and possibly adjusted.

The Advisory Board is in place to represent the “owners” (citizens) of Huntsville. They understand the relationship of City *tax-payer* and *park-user*, and have worked hard in upholding that relationship and trust. They also understand and respect the tremendous amounts of work and maintenance many groups have put back into their respective fields. The City’s “best” looking fields are located where a beneficial co-operation exists between the group or organization and the Parks and Recreation



Department. The Advisory Board considers co-operative arrangements as a productive tool in reducing operating costs and maintaining high levels of service.

Throughout the entire Master Plan process The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board have repeatedly advocated; “The time for establishing *user fees* is now”. The decision to require appropriate user fees was made in order to continue to provide quality services and facilities throughout the City now and into the future.

User fees such as admission, advertising, league/tournament and concession fees are common throughout the cities of Texas and the nation and can provide a significant contribution in reducing Departmental operating expenditures. Currently, the City is not collecting any significant amount of user fees to offset expenditures. The most probable source of user fees are the game fields and pool of Kate Barr Ross, Josey and Eastham-Thomason parks.

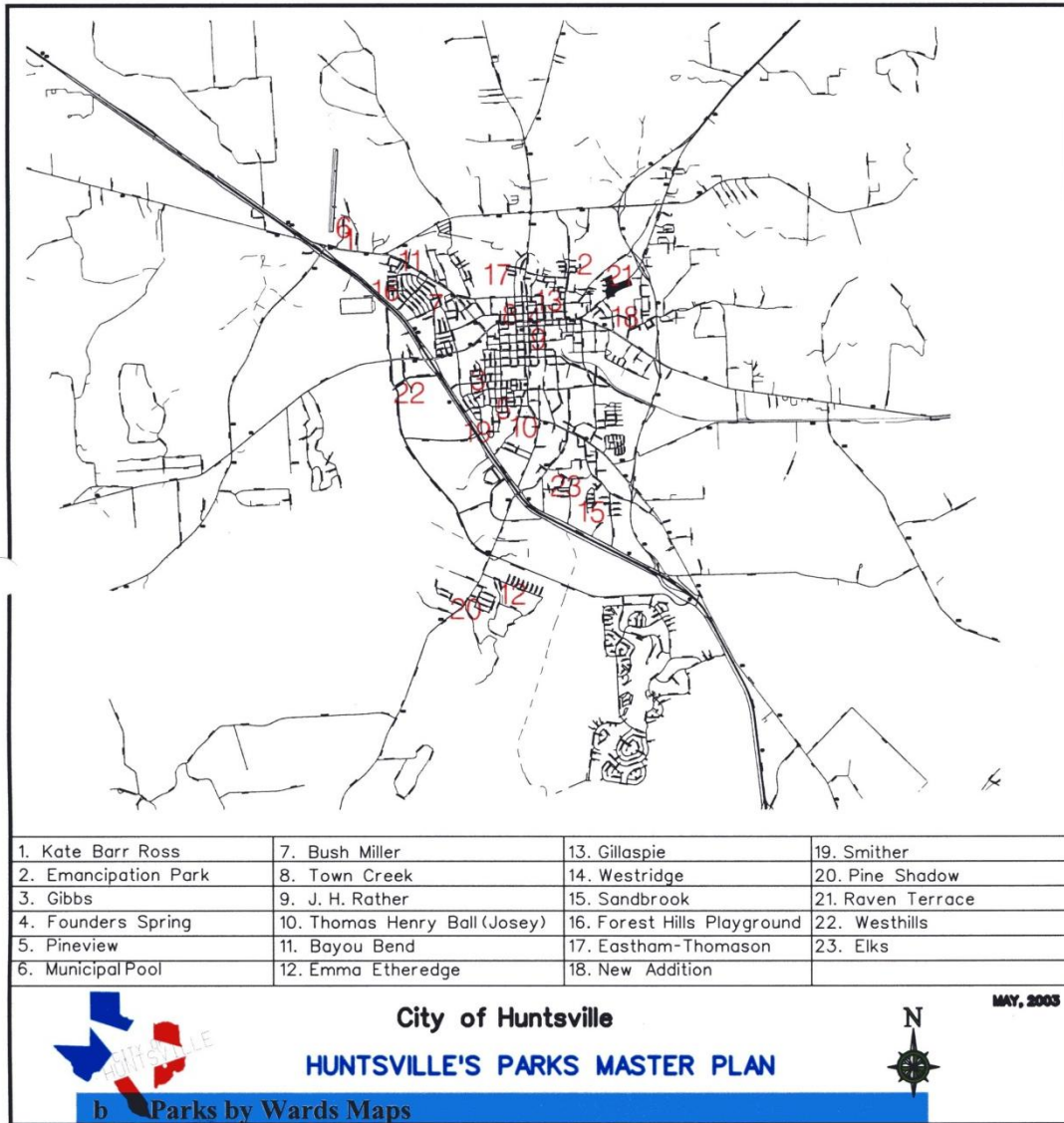
The Advisory Board is extremely concerned about the addition of new parks, fields and/or lights to the Parks and Recreation Department’s current workload and budget. At present, the Parks and Recreation Department is virtually “maxed-out” meeting its responsibilities. Staff and budget have been stretched to the limit. Modifications must be made to the operating practices of the Parks and Recreation Department. Therefore, the Department will need to generate revenues to cover rising operating expenses such as lights and maintenance. Operating and Maintenance costs must be factored into budgetary allocations to continue a proper level of funding per acre.

Sports fields and lights incur significant staffing, maintenance and electric costs. The Parks and Recreation Department has the responsibility for the payment of those costs out of the Department’s annual budget. Increased costs are often paid at the expense of other services and facilities. Some might describe it as “Robbing Peter to pay Paul”. One park “wins” while another park “loses”. This is not a sustainable approach for the Parks and Recreation Department, nor the City. User fees can address the problem of rising costs by providing revenue to offset increases in costs.

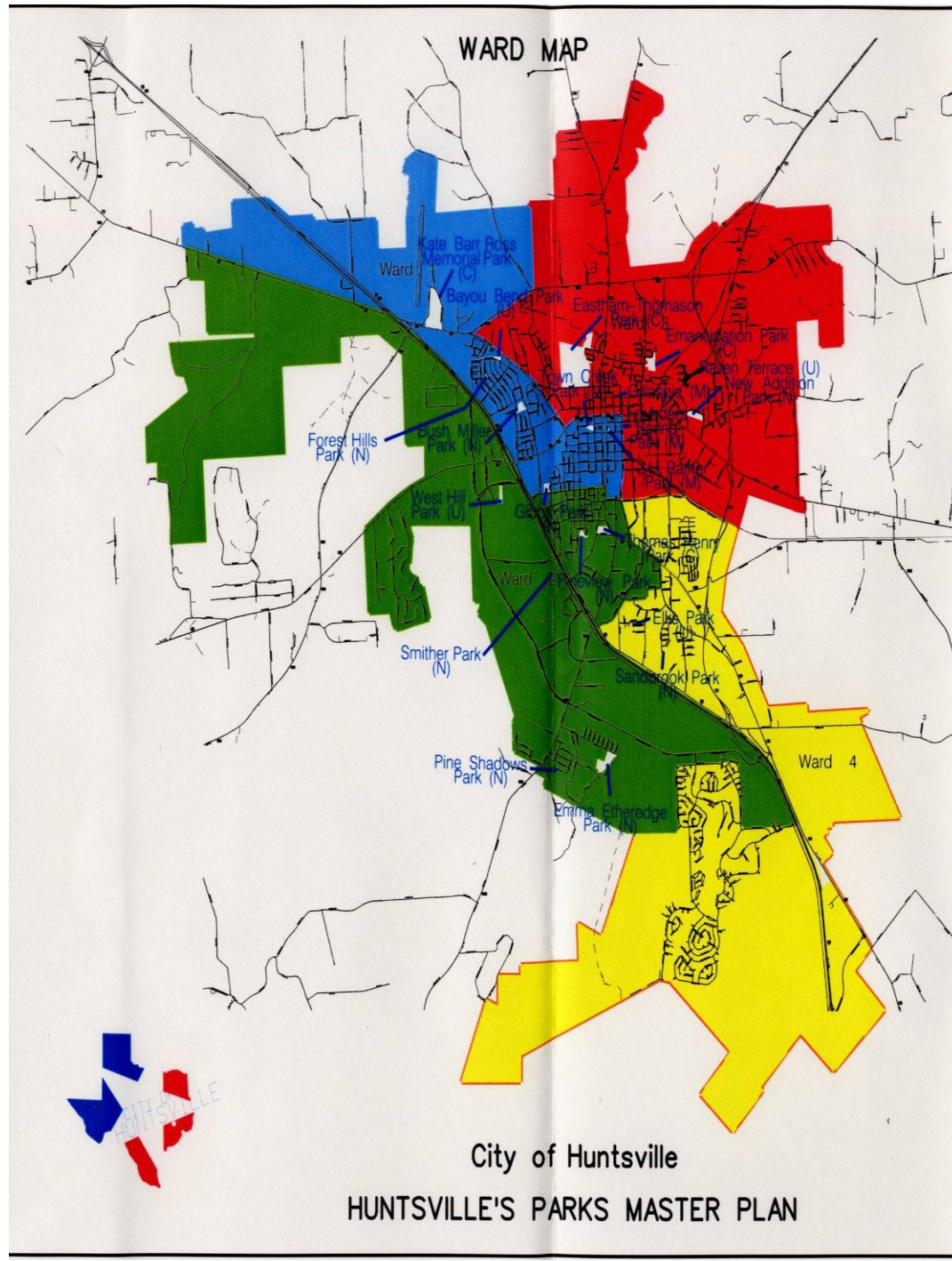
Concerns about the budget and operations go beyond the City’s 21 parks. The City requires new residential developments to dedicate 10% of their development as “Park space”. The Parks and Recreation Department is responsible to maintain any newly acquired “Park”. This relationship is sometimes problematic and should be revised through better communications with the Planning and Zoning Commission.

## 7 Maps

### a Current Huntsville Park Map



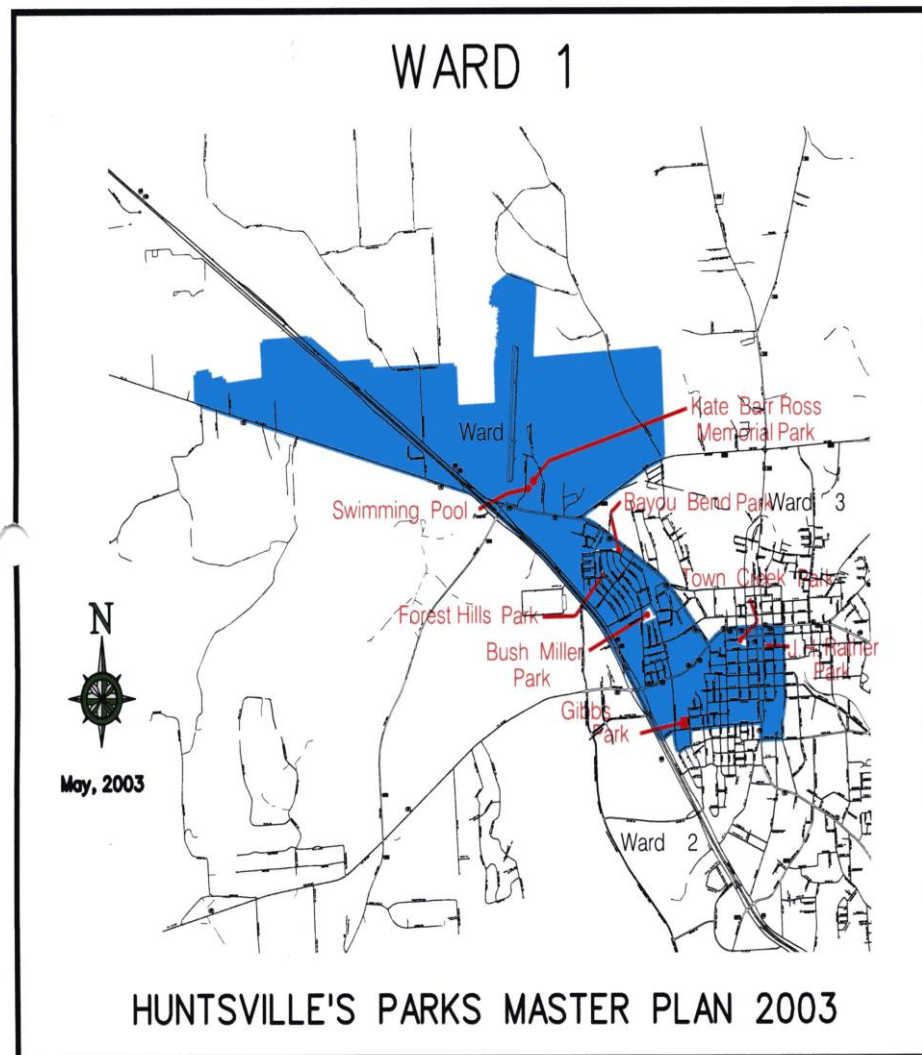
**b Parks by Wards Maps**



## WARD 1 Parks

Total: 41.2 acres

Bayou Bend  
Bush Miller  
Gibbs  
Forest Hills  
Kate Barr Ross  
Town Creek  
JH Rather





# Bayou Bend Park

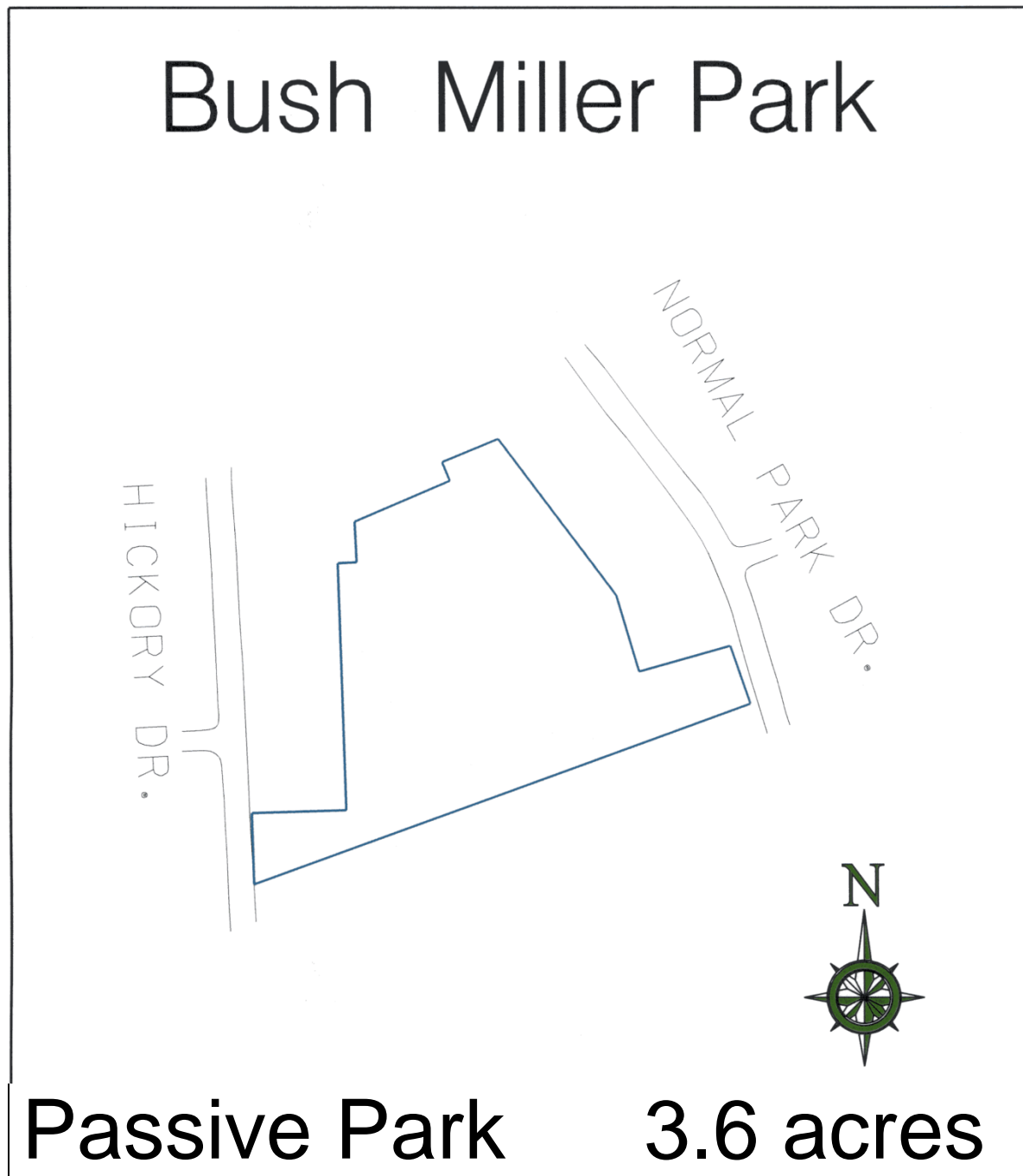


Neighborhood – 2.27 Acres



## **BAYOU BEND PARK**

<b>Park Type:</b>	Green Space
<b>Level of Service:</b>	Low/Difficult
<b>Location:</b>	Northeasterly corner Normal Park and Magnolia Way.
<b>Park size:</b>	2.26 acres.
<b>Acquisition:</b>	Platted with subdivision, Volume 1, Page 17, PRWCT.
<b>Existing facilities:</b>	None.
<b>Other information:</b>	A Drainage area. Could be “adopted” by a local volunteer group.





## **BUSH MILLER PARK**

<b>Park Type:</b>	Passive
<b>Level of Service:</b>	Low/Difficult
<b>Location:</b>	South of Crosstimbers between Normal Park and Hickory.
<b>Park size:</b>	3.6 acres.
<b>Existing facilities:</b>	Lighted gravel walking loop trail, Gazebo, scattered picnic tables, beautiful landscaping, pond setting with bridge.
<b>Acquisition:</b>	Originally platted as an unrestricted reserve in Volume 1, Page



132, PRWCT, the property was deeded by Miller Bush August 24, 1989 as recorded in a gift deed found in Volume 103, Page 109 of the deed records, Walker County, Texas. The park dedication contains the following provisions:

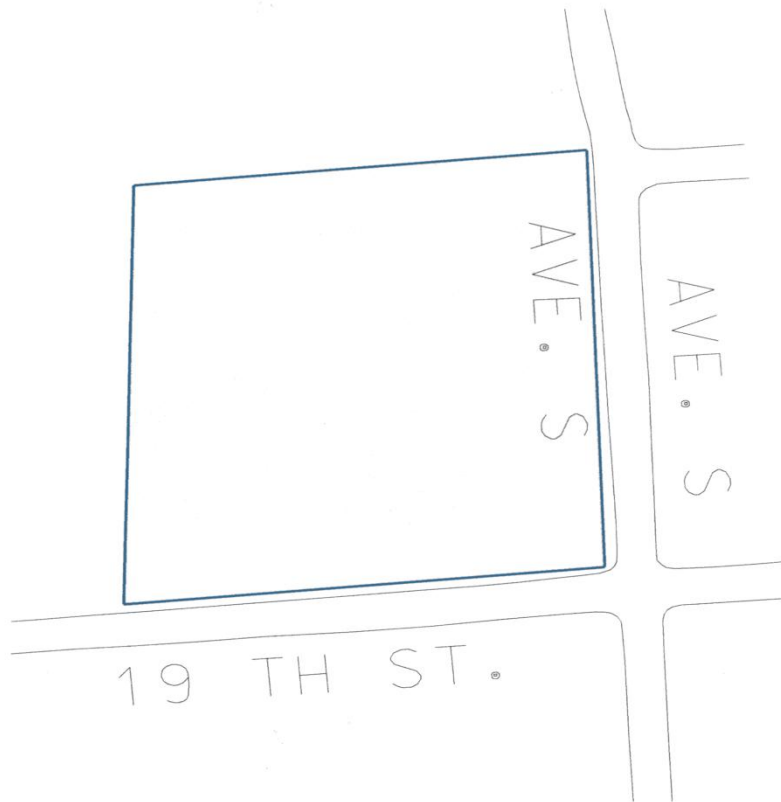
- 1) This property shall be developed, utilized and maintained as a park for the enjoyment of the citizens of Huntsville;
- 2) There shall be placed and forever maintained at some suitable point within the park a monument dedicated (sic) the park to the memory of Leonard Ewing Bush and Mr. and Mrs. Rufus Walter Miller, Sr.

The park was actually donated to the non-profit Huntsville Natural and Cultural Resources, Inc.

**Other information:** This park is bounded on the west and east by apartments and on the north and south by single family residential. The park is essentially landlocked with access pathways through narrow parcels of land out to the public streets. There is no off street parking.



# Gibbs Park



Passive 4.09 Acres



## **GIBBS PARK**

**Park Type:** Passive

**Level of Service:** Low/Difficult

**Location:** Northwest corner Avenue S at 19<sup>th</sup> Street.

**Park Size:** 4 acres.

**Acquisition:** Dedicated as a passive pastoral park by Four G company and Virginia G. Smith trust in 1985 with reversionary option clause if property is not used as park.

Deed recorded in Volume 454, Page 462m DRWCR. (12-27-85).

**Existing Facilities:** Picnic tables, park benches lots of natural vegetation.

**Other information:** This park is bounded on the west by a creek. It has gently rolling

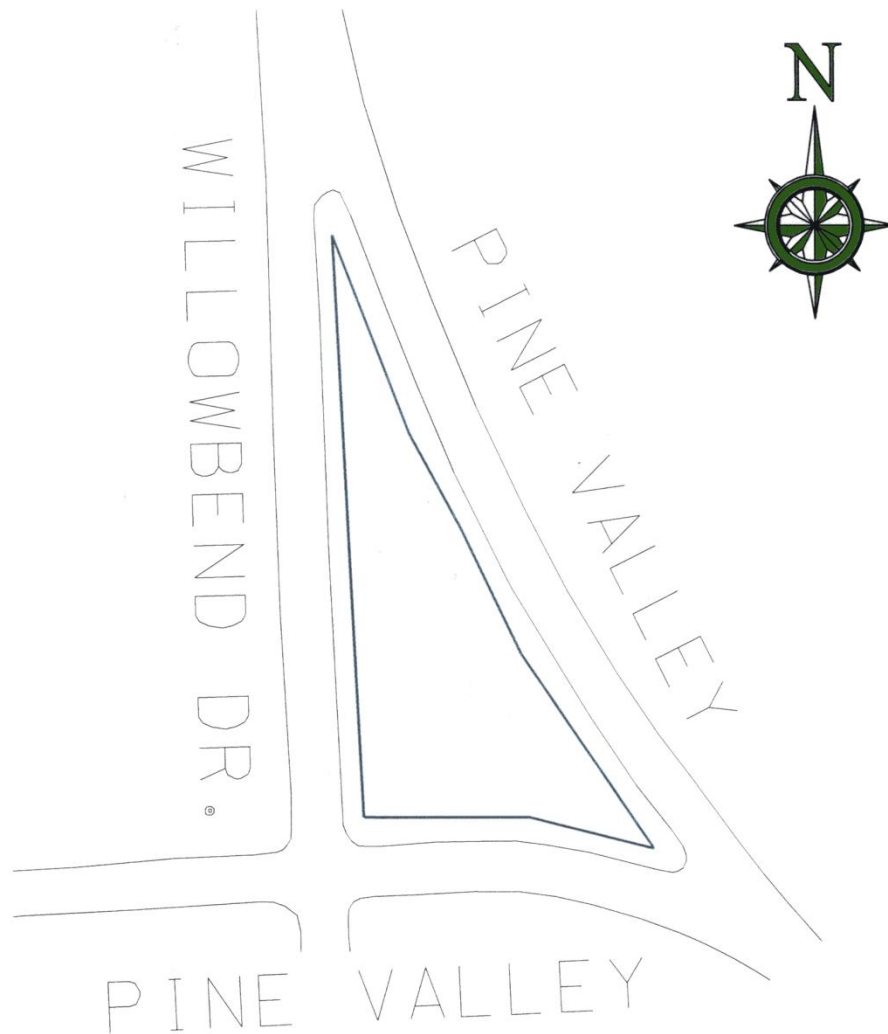
terrain generally falling from southeast corner to the northwest corner. It is heavily wooded. An elementary school borders the property on the east and a residential neighborhood borders on the north. The west neighbor is largely undeveloped woodlands.

The dedication statement in the recorded deed instrument reads:

“This property shall be developed, utilized and maintained as a passive pastoral park for the enjoyment of the citizens of Huntsville, and the development of the property shall be restricted to activities which take advantage of the area’s natural topography and vegetation”.

Every City Should Have at its Heart,  
a Great Park

# Forest Hills Park



Neighborhood – 0.624 Acres





### **FOREST HILLS NEIGHBORHOOD PARK**

- Park Type:** Neighborhood
- Level of Service:** Moderate
- Location:** In the “Y” created by Willow Bend and Pine Valley confluence en Forest Hills Subdivision Section 4.
- Park size:** 0.6 acres.
- Acquisition:** Platted with subdivision, Volume 1, Page 17, PRWCT.
- Existing facilities:** Swings,  
Play structure,  
Two picnic tables with barbecue pit.
- Other information:** This park is surrounded on three sides by residential subdivision streets. It is partially shaded with mature trees and partially open grassy play areas.

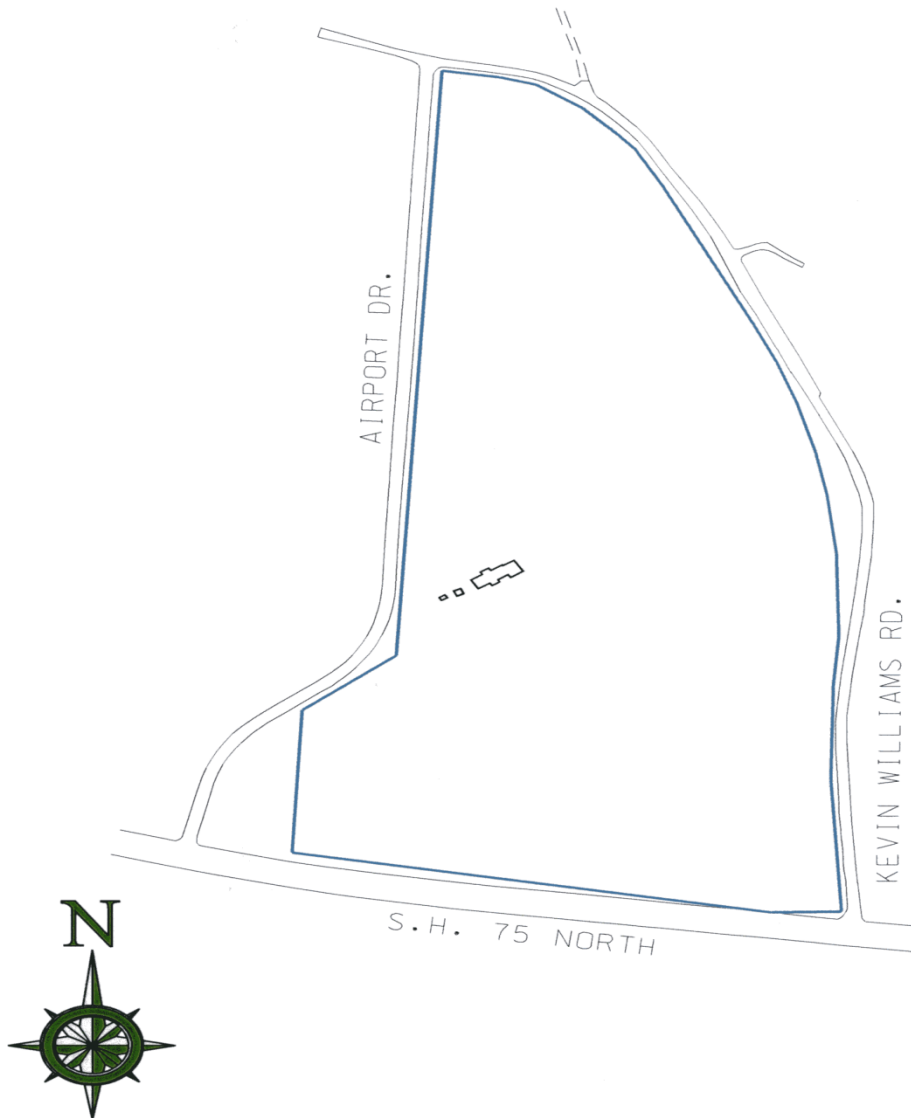




Every City Should Have at its Heart,  
a Great Park

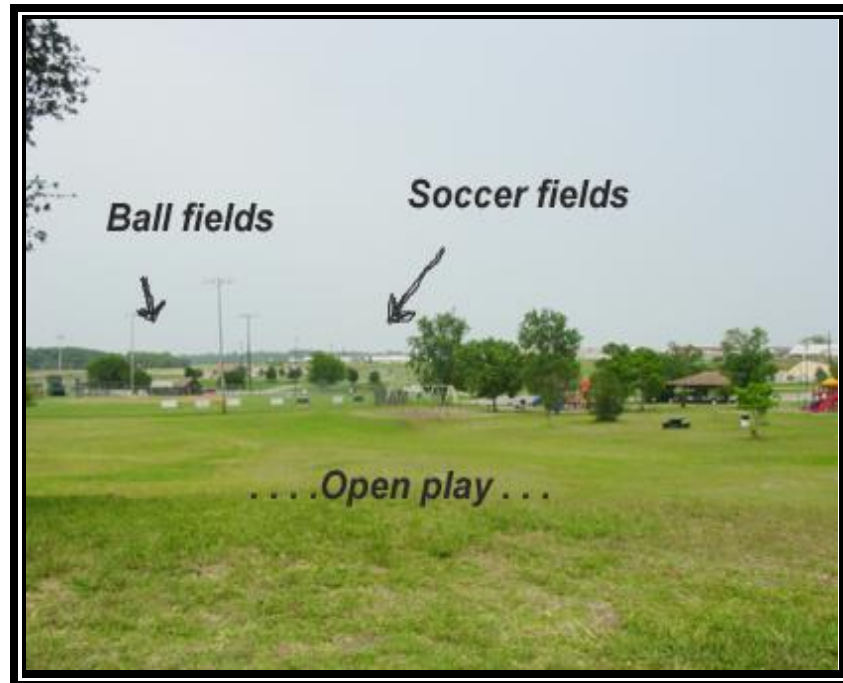


# Kate Barr Ross Memorial Park



City – 29.79 Acres

**KATE BARR ROSS PARK**



Lights cost money.





## KATE BARR ROSS PARK

<b>Park Type:</b>	City
<b>Level of Service:</b>	High
<b>Location:</b>	East side of North U.S. 75 and North of 11 <sup>th</sup> Street.
<b>Park Size:</b>	29.79 acres.
<b>Acquisition:</b>	Dedicated as Park in 1976.
<b>Existing Facilities:</b>	Numerous playground structures including swings, slides, climbers, spring toys, Octagonal group picnic pavilion with tables, Lighted soccer field with some fencing and a concession building, High school baseball field 315' foul line/375' center field, 3 Little League fields 190', Softball fields – Adult – 300', Girl's – 220', 13-14 Boy's baseball field 275',

Scattered picnic tables,

Restrooms at tri-plex fields,

Restrooms/concession at fourplex fields,

40' x 80' swimming pool and 15' diameter wading pool,

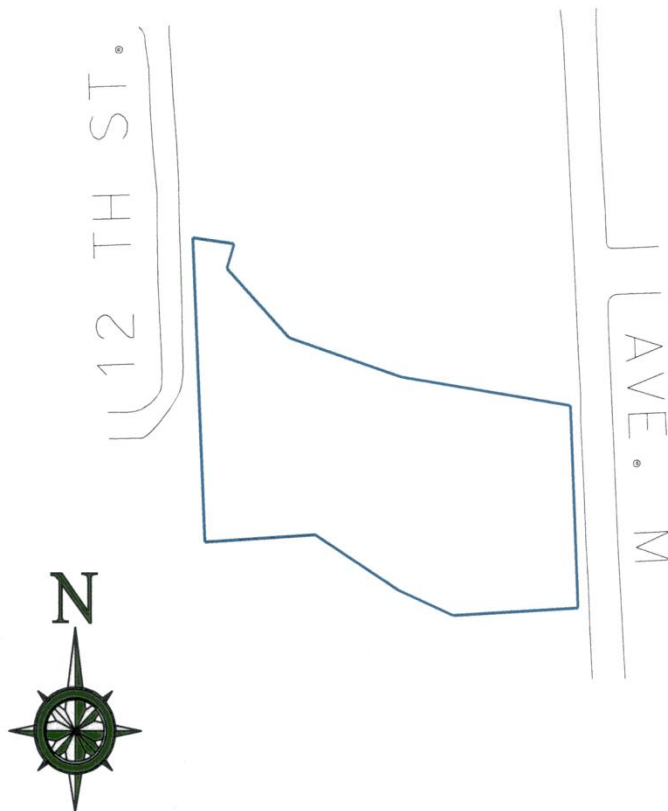
Bath house with restrooms and storage, filter equipment, chemicals,

Asphalt parking areas (4 separate areas).

**Other information:** Heavily used, this park is the location for most soccer, softball, and baseball league play for all age groups in the city. The park is mostly clear with only scattered trees and none with significant shade.

The playground structures are scattered through out the park. The terrain is rolling hills between major division areas. One fourplex and the pool occupy the high ground overlooking to the north over fields, the playground and picnic pavilion. The lighted soccer field is high above these other fields. Situated on the east edge of the park, a deep valley is formed through the middle property. Informal backstops occupy northern corners of the soccer field. Concrete sidewalk and bleacher pad areas around soccer field.

# Town Creek Park



Neighborhood – 2.08 Acres





## **TOWN CREEK PARK**

**Park Type:** Neighborhood

**Level of Service:** Moderate

**Location:** Avenue M at 12<sup>th</sup> Street.

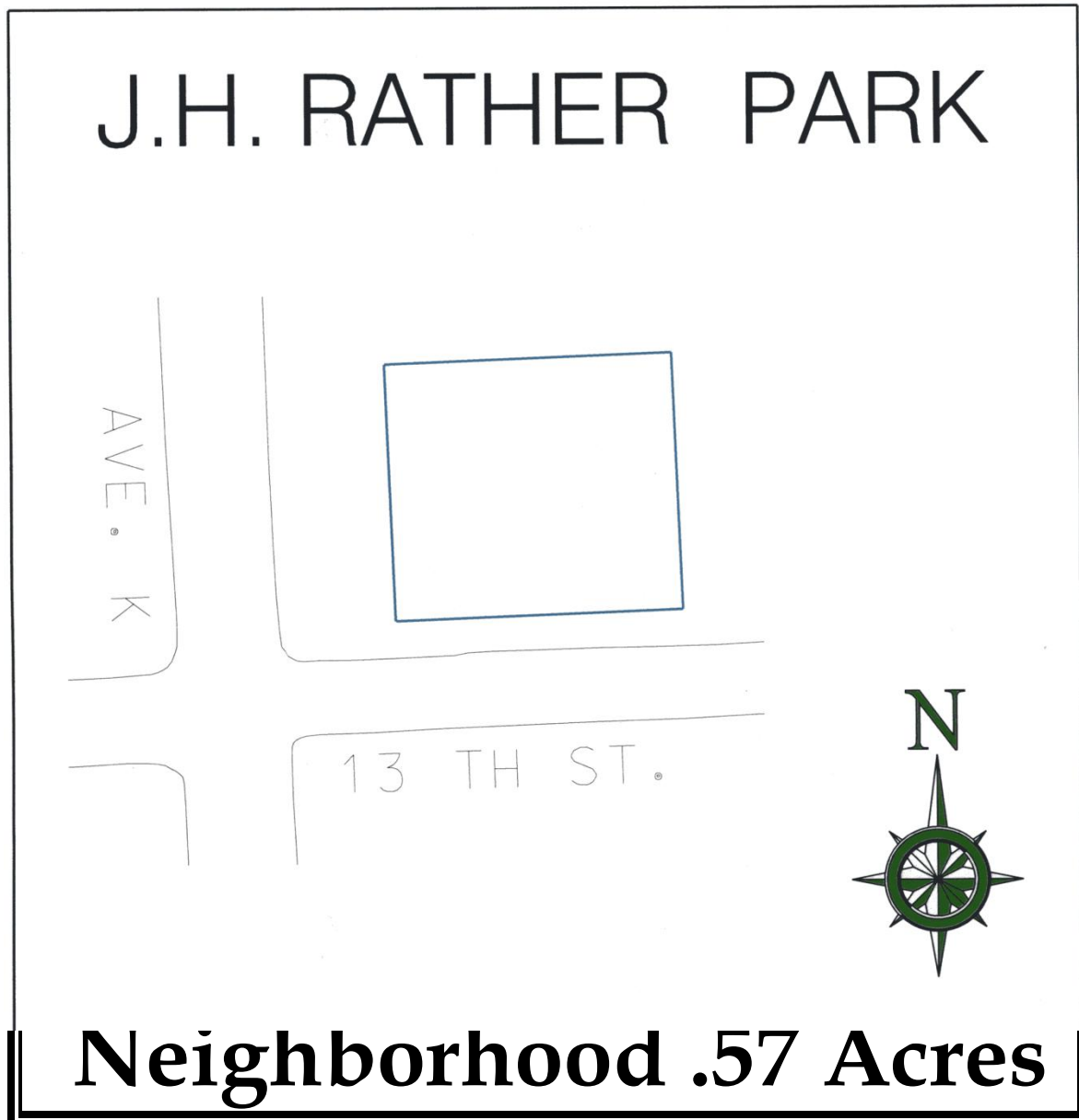
**Park Size:** 0.18 acres.

**Acquisition:** Conveyed to the city by deed February 11, 1983 and found in Volume 408, Page 414 DRWCT.

**Existing Facilities:** A foot bridge crossing Town Creek,

A short walking path along Town Creek,

**Other information:** This park is adjacent to Town Creek on the opposite bank from City Hall. The property fronts 42.78 feet on Avenue M and roughly 185 feet along the creek.







### **J.H. RATHER PARK**

**Park Type:** Neighborhood

**Level of Service:** Moderate

**Location:** Northeast corner 13<sup>th</sup> Street and University Avenue.

**Park Size:** .57 acre

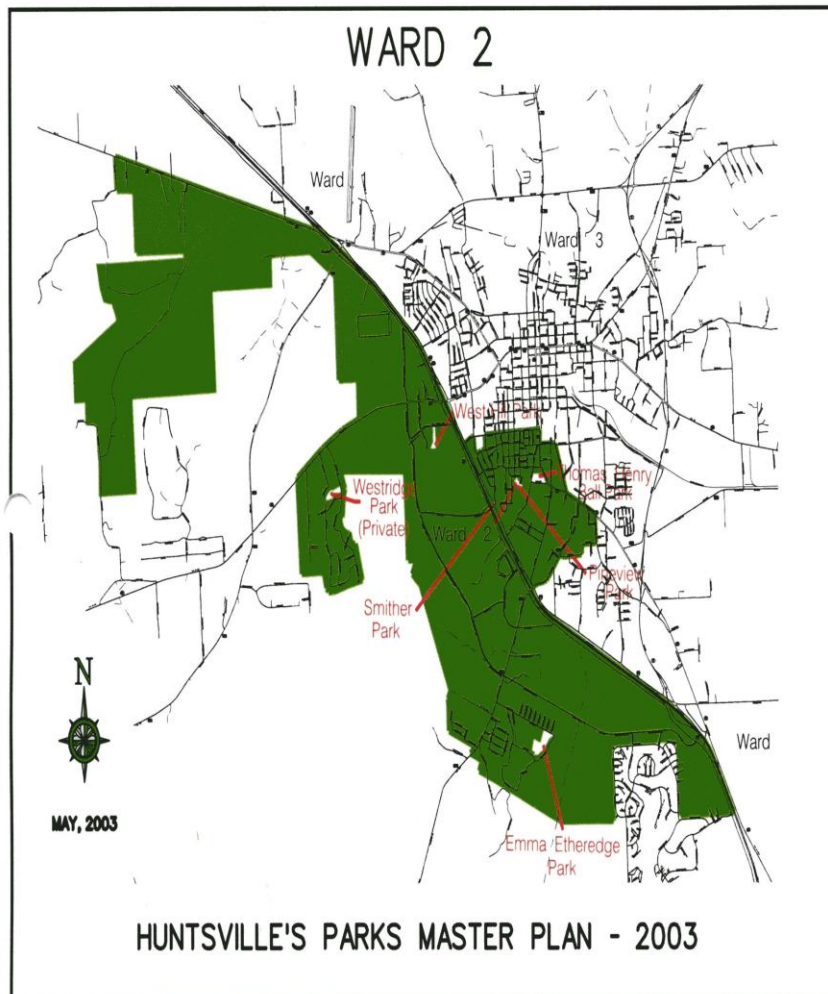
**Acquisition:** This park is `... for the temporary use of the Mary Henry Rather Estate property on the northeast corner of 13<sup>th</sup> Street and University Avenue... as a Temporary City park facilities.`

**Existing Facilities:** Two picnic tables, 2 swings, new steps and a flag.

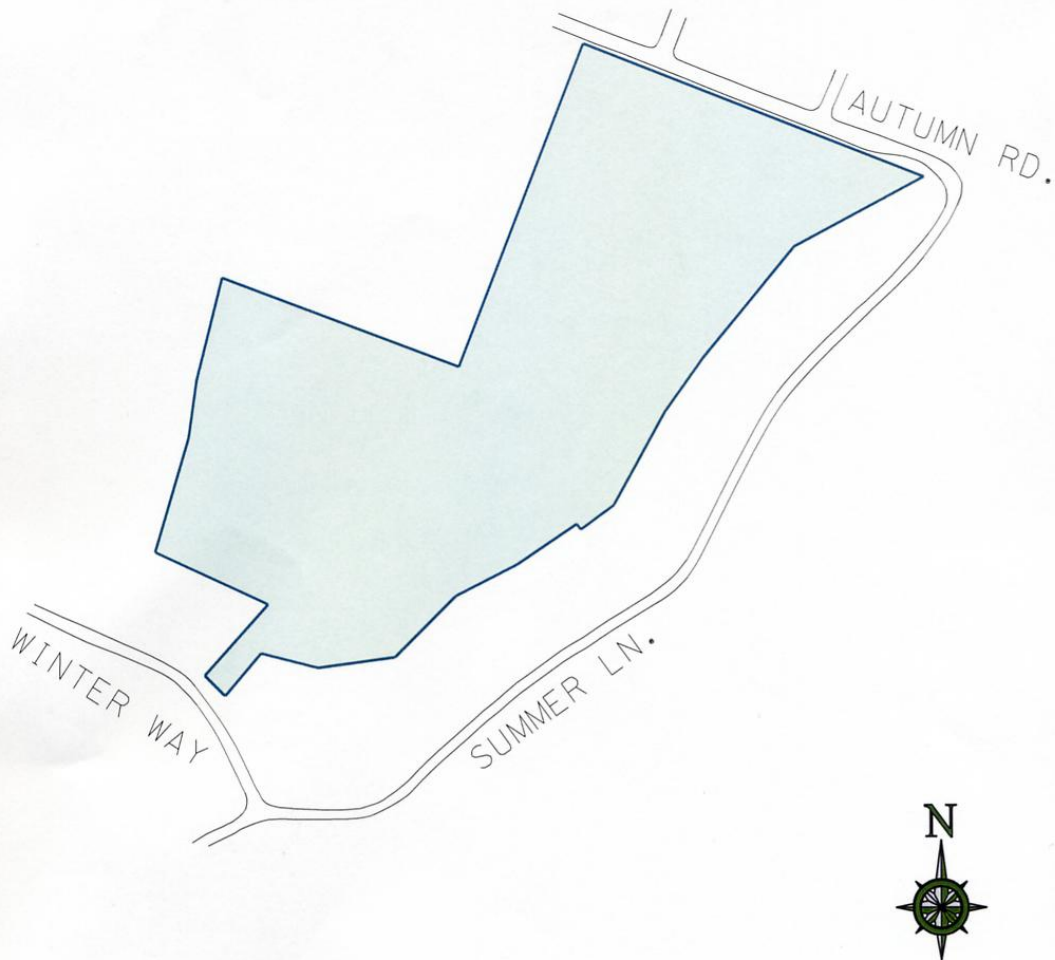
**Other information:** High above the side walk on University Avenue, and plenty of mature trees shade the two tables. This park has been designated “Art Park”.

## WARD 2 Parks

Emma Etheredge
Pine Shadow
West Hill
Smither
Pine View
Thomas Henry Ball (Josey Park)
Total = 11.05



## Emma Etheredge Park



Neighborhood Park – 1.29 Acres



### **EMMA ETHEREDGE PARK**

**Park Type:** Neighborhood

**Level of Service:** Moderate

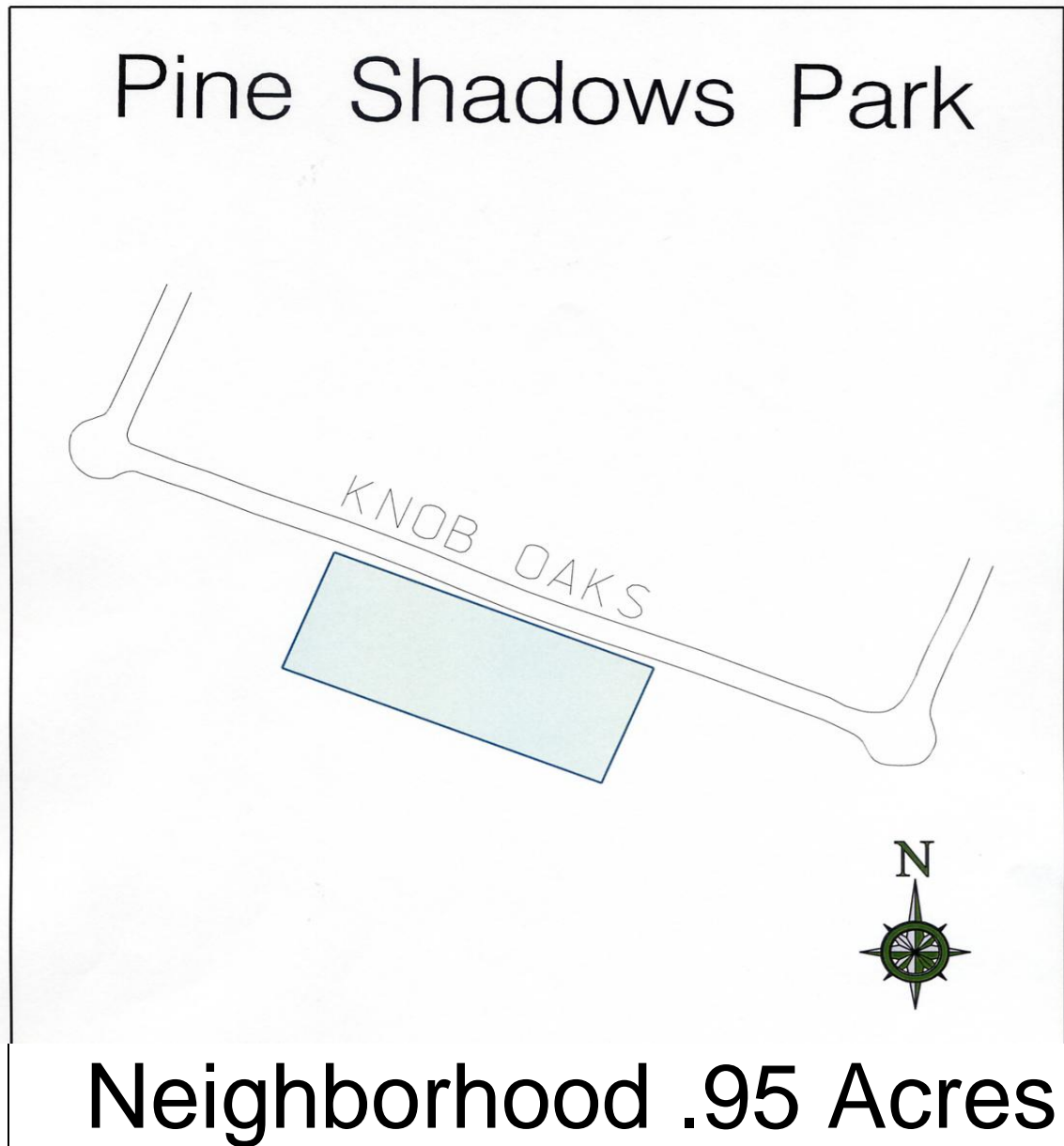
**Location:** On Autumn Lane in the Spring Lake Subdivision.

**Park size:** 14 acres.

**Acquisition:** The park was acquired in a gift from M.B. Etheredge: 1.292 acres conveyed in January, 1987 and recorded in Volume 34, Page 29 DRWCT with reversionary clause to the grantor.

**Existing facilities:** Swings, slide and 2 spring toys, 2 picnic tables, barbecue grill.

**Other information:** This park is heavily wooded and centers along a stream feeding into a neighborhood lake. The ground in the low areas is largely mud and standing water with many wetland attributes. The park has very little street frontage and limited parking. The bottomlands are flat but the property rises steeply to the northwest. Much of the land to the north of the park is vacant wooded land. Along the south boundary of the park is a residential neighborhood. The park traverses the creek between two neighborhood streets.







## **PINE SHADOWS PARK**

- Park Type:** Neighborhood
- Level of Service:** Moderate
- Location:** Fronting Knob Oaks Drive in the Pine Shadows Subdivision.
- Park Size:** 0.95 acres.
- Acquisition:** Dedicated by plat recorded in Volume 174, Page 620 PRWCT.
- Existing Facilities:** Two wooden picnic tables, 1 swing set with three swings, Cooking grill, fountain.
- Other information:** The park is largely within the flood plain. It is wooded and nicely maintained. To the north and south are additional vacant wooded lots some bordering on the stream. To the rear is wooded lands not part of the subdivision. The property is fronted by a paved and curbed street (Knob Oaks Drive).

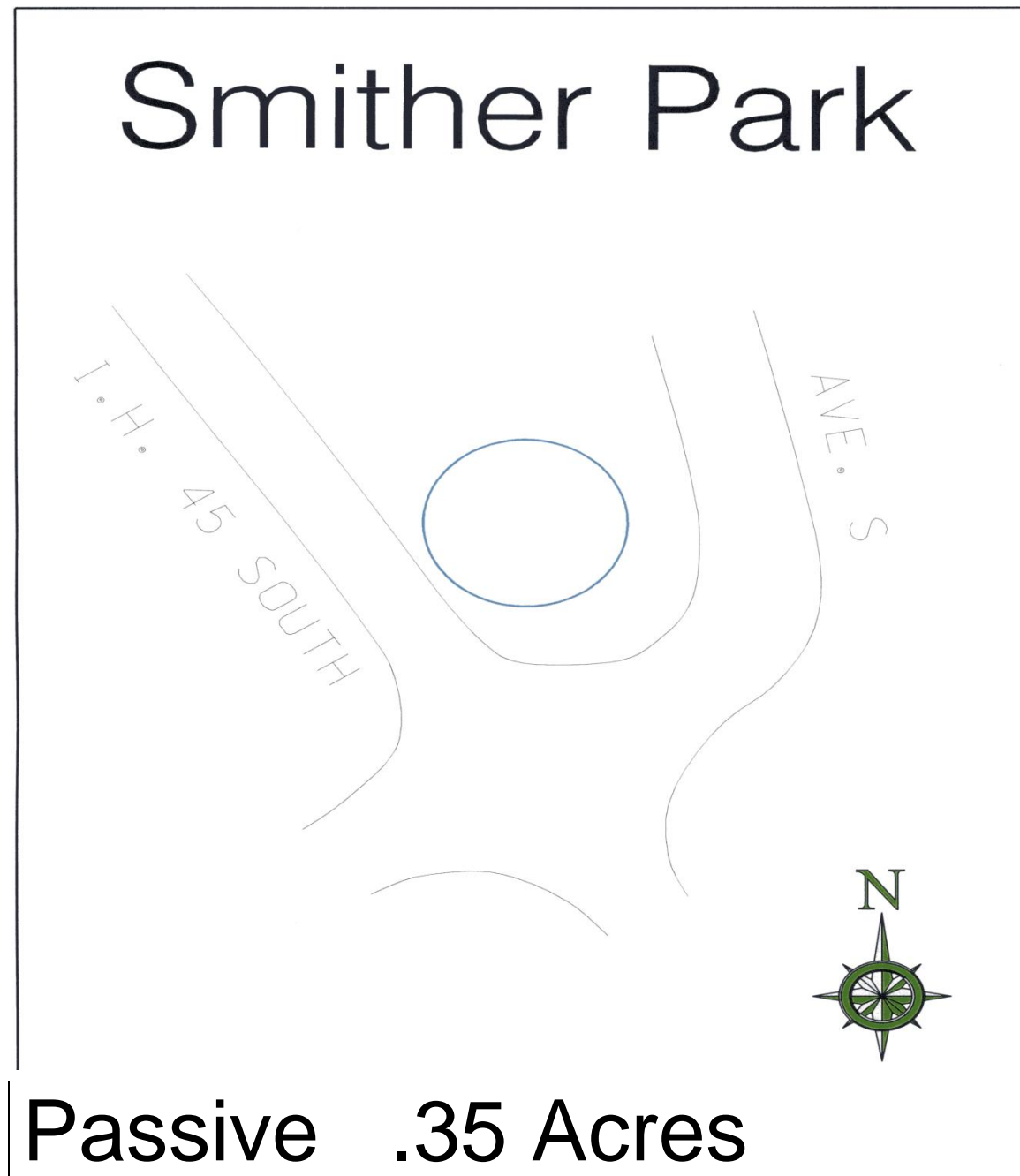




## **WEST HILL PARK**

<b>Park Type:</b>	Green Space
<b>Level of Service:</b>	Low/Difficult
<b>Location:</b>	The north side of this park (approximately 90' in length) fronts the public right of way for Commerce Plaza, with the west side abutting a 60' wide drainage easement for 988.49'. This park is within the West Hill Subdivision – Section One.
<b>Park Size:</b>	2.4 acres. A drainage area with no amenities.
<b>Acquisition:</b>	Platted as a Public Park within the West Hills Subdivision, Volume 1, Page 185, PRWCT, in 1984.







### **SMITHER PARK**

**Park Type:** Passive

**Level of Service:** Low/Difficult

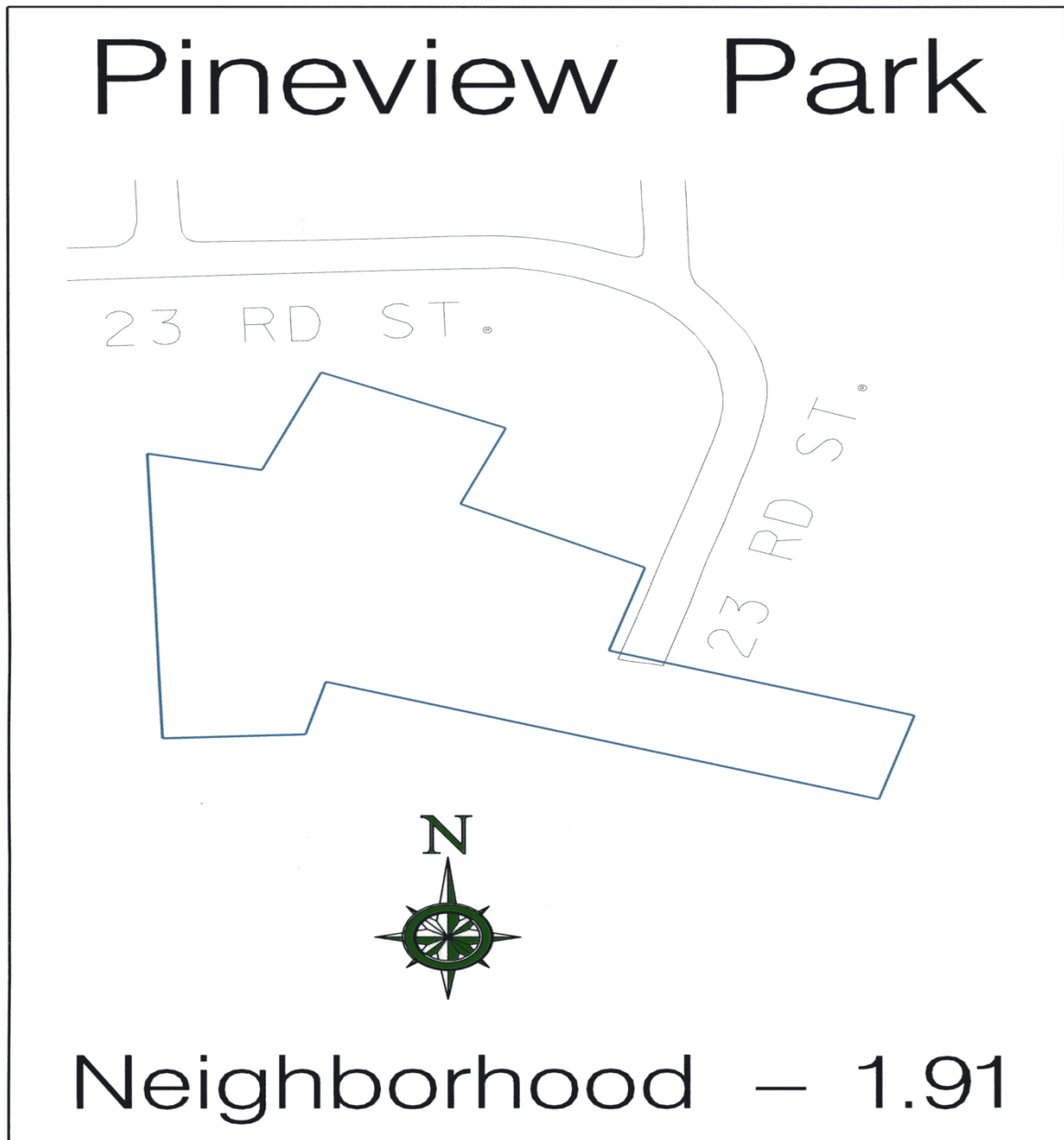
**Location:** Avenue S where it intersects the I-45 east service road.

**Park Size:** 0.35 acres,

**Acquisition:** Gifted by Highland Properties, Inc. in September, 1983 by warranty deed found in Volume 418, Page 504 DRWCT with a reversionary clause that the property reverts to the grantor if the property ceases to be used as a park.

**Existing Facilities:** A picnic table, park bench, stone pathway about 150 feet long, 13 small brass sculptures scattered along the path.

**Other information:** This property serves as a buffer between an upper middle class neighborhood and the freeway service road. The property is heavily wooded with most mostly young oak and pine and a few mature trees. There are no parking facilities on the property.





### **PINEVIEW PARK**

**Location:** Avenue N1/2 and Pineview Drive.

**Park Size:** 1.9 acres.

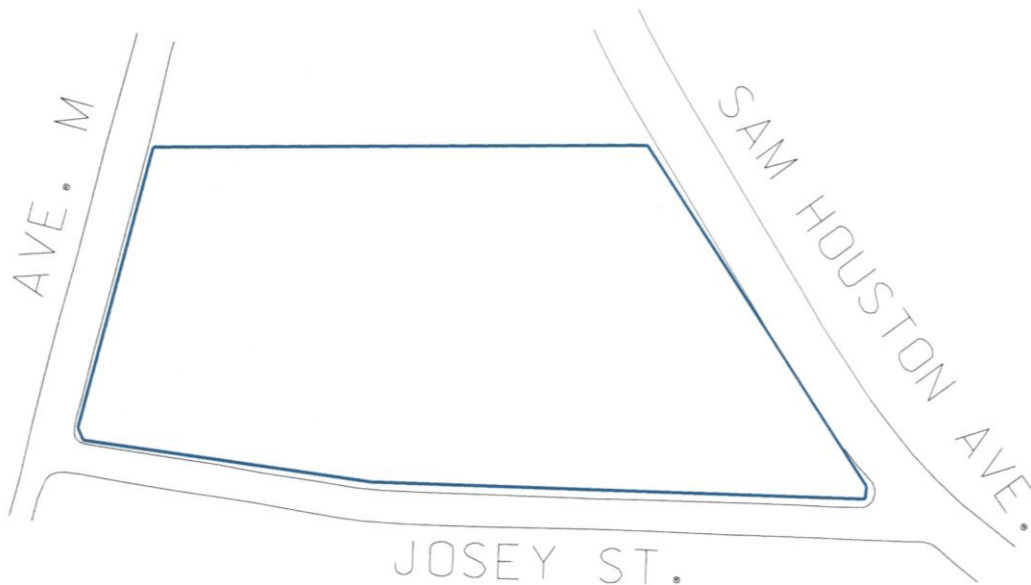
**Acquisition:** Dedicated by gift warranty deed Volume 422, Page 331, DRWCT in 1983.



**Existing Facilities:** Swings (6), 1 wooden picnic table, playground equipment including a whirl, spring toy, and giraffe, park bench.

**Other information:** This park is built along a drainage area near Pineview Street toward the Sam Houston State University property adjacent.

# Thomas Henry Ball Park



City – 6 Acres



**THOMAS HENRY HALL PARK (JOSEY PARK)**

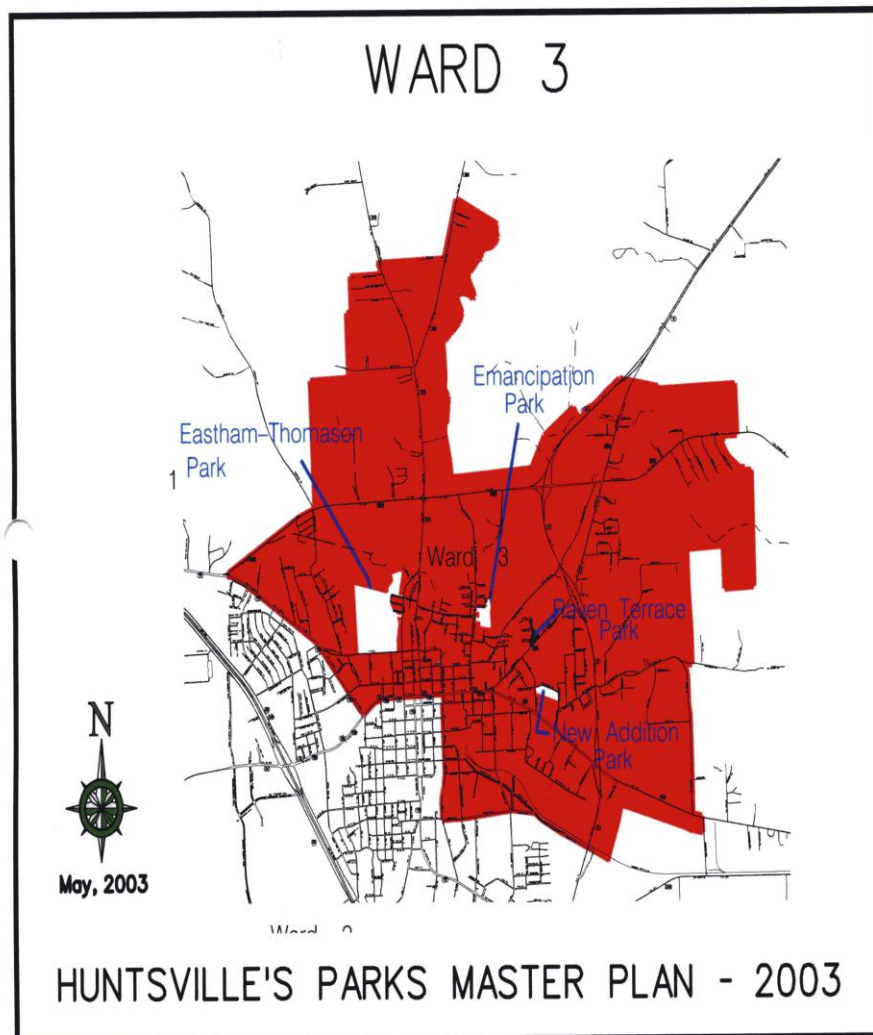
- Park Type:** City
- Level of Service:** High
- Location:** Bounded by Josey Street, Avenue M, Sam Houston Avenue, and 22<sup>nd</sup> Street.
- Park Size:** 6 acres.
- Acquisition:** This tract partially dedicated by deed from Josey family heirs to the City by deed dated June 13, 1939 (roughly 2.09 acres). The balance is leased from the Josey Foundation since 1968.
- Existing Facilities:** Lighted adult softball field, 2 picnic tables, “Tot Lot” playground with swing, slide, backhoe, and spring toys, restrooms, 1 full court basketball area.
- Other information:** Nice ball-field, restrooms and basketball courts are not in good conditions. Trees and shrubs had overgrown much of the restroom and the facility is certainly not wheel-chair accessible.

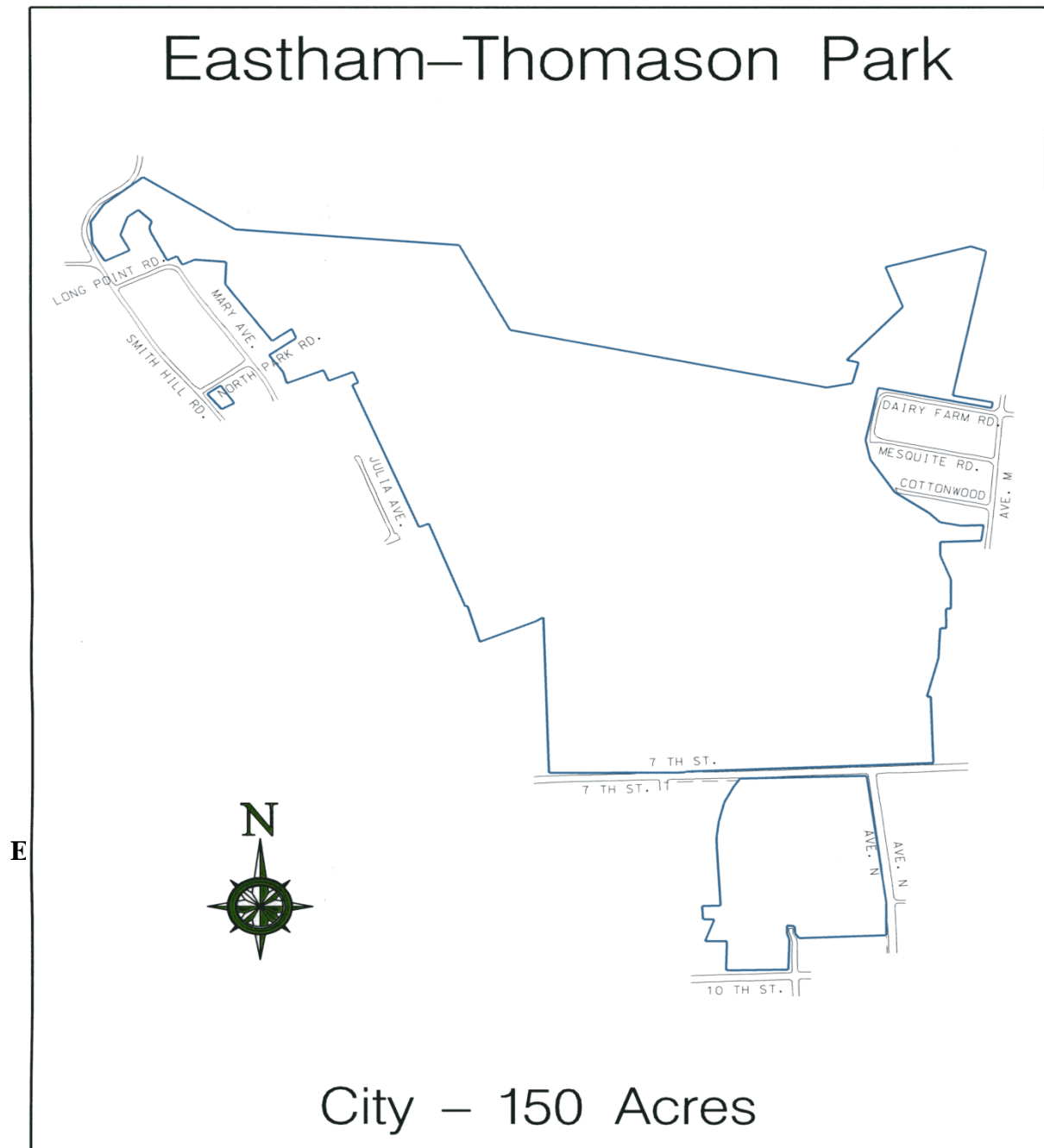




## WARD 3 Parks

<b>Eastham Thomason</b>
<b>Raven Terrace</b>
<b>Emancipation</b>
<b>New Addition</b>
<b>Gillaspie</b>
<b>Founders</b>
<b>Total = 165.5</b>









Ave M and 7<sup>th</sup> Street - Looking West



Avenue N and 10<sup>th</sup> Street – Looking Northwest.



Soccer matches dominate this field, especially on Sundays.



Play Module



Neighborhood Basketball



## **EASTHAM-THOMASON PARK**

**Park Type:** City

**Level of Service:** High

**Location:** Between 7<sup>th</sup> Street on the south and the Diagnostic Center for the Texas Department of Criminal Justice on the north. Bounded by vacant city and privately owned land on the west and scattered low/moderate income residential and small business neighborhood on the east.

**Park size:** 150 acres.

**Acquisition:** Donation, 1990 purchase, 2002.

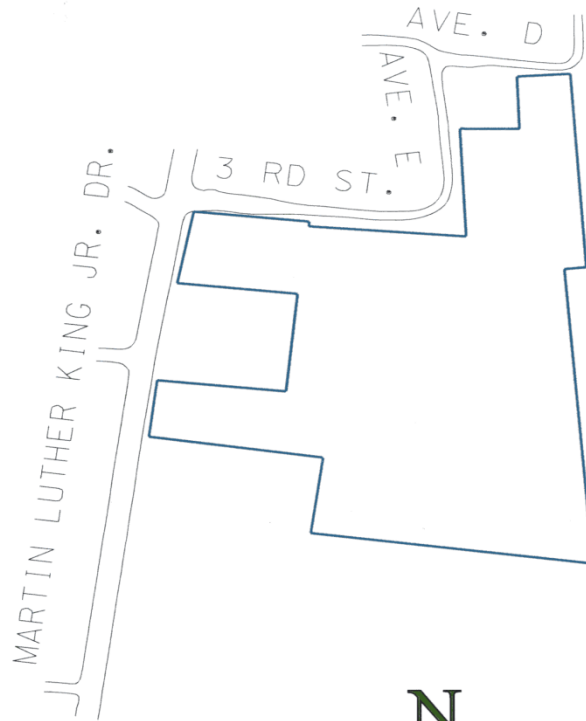
- (1) Conveyed by the Estate of Marguerite Eastham Thomason in November, 1990 to the City of Huntsville, 33.45 acres recorded in Volume 131, Page 809 DRWCT. (Deed calls later corrected in Vol. 139, Page 871).
- (2) Tracts 1 and 2 deeded by Braxton Thomason by deed dated May 13, 1992 as recorded in Volume 168, Page 003, DRWCT.
- (3) 0.111 acres by Esther Bridges to the City of Huntsville by deed recorded in Volume 197, Page 432, DRWCT.
- (4) 7.0 acres – City of Huntsville property dedicated as Park Volume 92, Page 3, DRWCT.
- (5) 1.0 acres - City of Huntsville property dedicated as Park, Volume 39, Page 382, DRWCT.
- (6) 0.852 acres – Braxton deeded to City of Huntsville, Volume 0092, Page 99, O.R.

**Existing facilities:** A full court concrete basketball court,  
Some picnic facilities (small tables),  
Restrooms,  
Informal backstop,  
Lighted concrete trail system from 7<sup>th</sup> street to basketball courts,  
Asphalt parking lot at basketball courts.  
Sidewalks  
Trails  
Foot Bridge

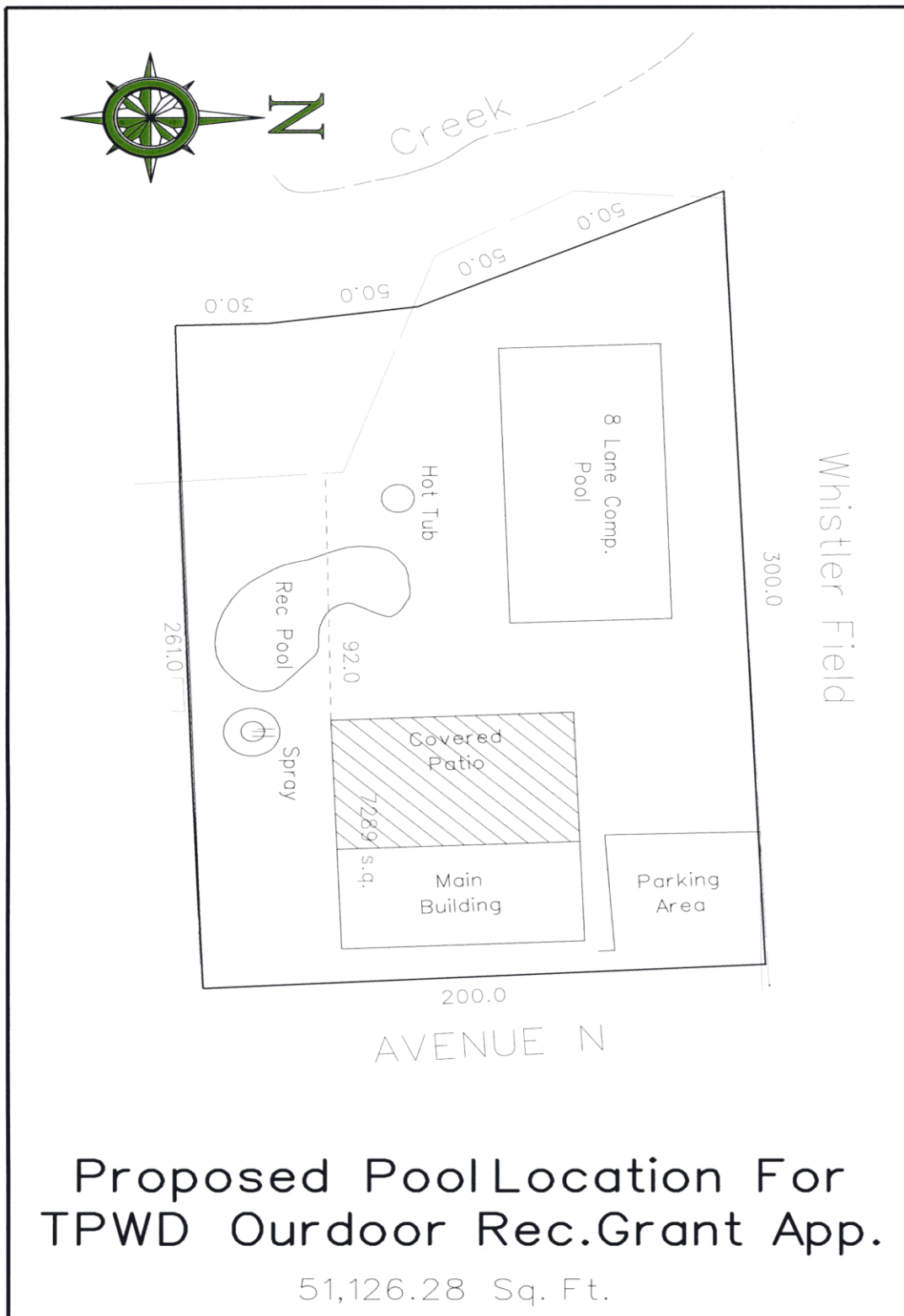
**Other information:** Largely built along a creek, this property is heavily wooded except for a stretch along the trail where there are scattered woods and clearings. The trail is lightened by periodic electric pole lights used throughout Huntsville city parks. The trail has a precast bridge crossing one branch of a creek. Recommendations will be made in other sections of this master plan to address these issues.



# Emancipation Park



City – 10.4 Acres

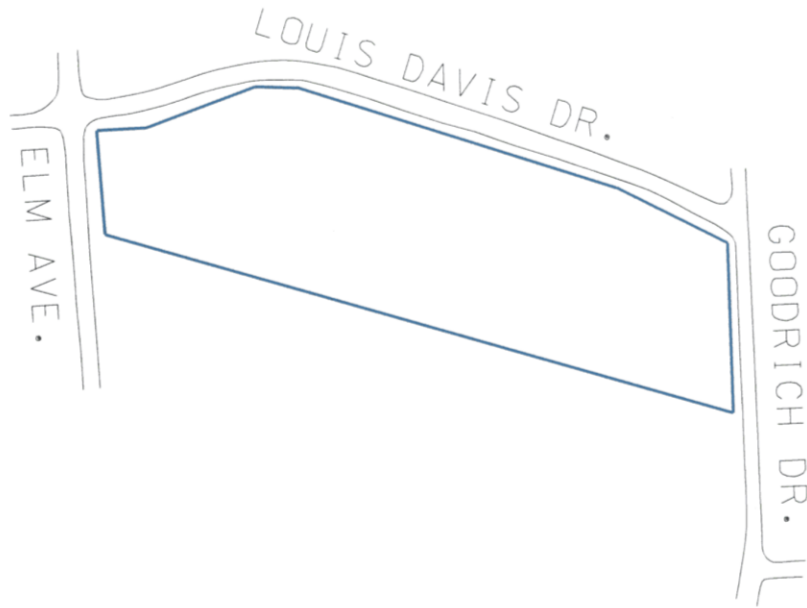




### **EMANCIPATION PARK**

- Park Type:** City
- Level of Service:** High
- Location:** West of Martin Luther King, Jr., Blvd.
- Park size:** 10.4 acres.
- Existing facilities:** Full court basketball court under metal building roof,  
Restroom facilities,  
Eight picnic tables (scattered),  
Large asphalt parking lot (100+cars),  
Fenced playground with 6 swings, 7 spring toys, and a climber arch,  
Informal backstop,  
Two horseshoe pits,  
concrete benches and planters,  
Martin Luther King, Jr., Community Center building (seats up to 150 for meals;  
fee for use).
- Other information:** The Pavilion shelter is 100x50. A new surface and restroom are needed.

# New Addition Park



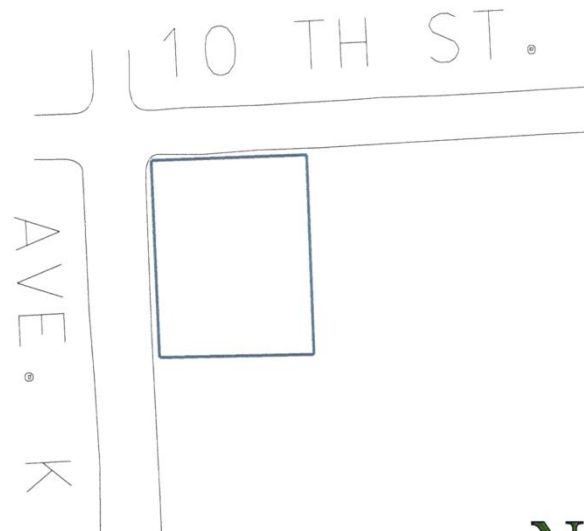
Neighborhood – 2 ac. +/-



#### **NEW ADDITION PARK**

- Park Type:** Neighborhood
- Level of Service:** Moderate
- Location:** North side of U.S. Hwy 190 East at Elm Street.
- Acquisition:** The park is school property owned by Huntsville ISD and is dedicating by joint use agreement as a public park during non-school hours.
- Existing Facilities:** Six multipurpose softball/soccer play fields with informal backstops and no lighting,  
Three picnic areas with barbecue grilles,  
Playground structure,  
A single football goal post on one practice field,  
Asphalt parking area,  
Practice basketball backboards on edge of asphalt parking.
- Other information:** The park is available for public use during non-school hours. The city has provided the improvements. It is a wide open park with scattered groves of trees and large play areas making it suitable for practice and lower age group soccer games. There is also a school gymnasium known as Louis Davis Gym which is immediately adjacent to the park and is available through the YMCA for team basketball practices and games.

# Founders Spring Park



Passive .688 Acres





## FOUNDERS PARK

**Park Type:** Passive

**Level of Service:** Moderate

**Location:** Southeast corner 10<sup>th</sup> Street at University Avenue.

**Acquisition:** By dedication.

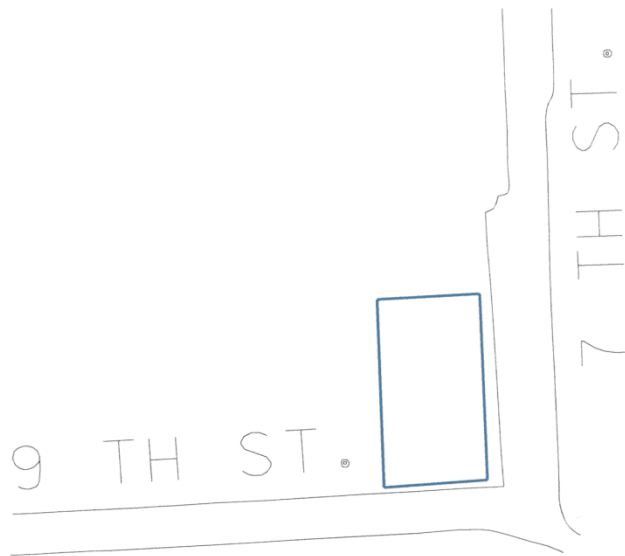
**Existing facilities:** Park bench,  
Landscaping and sculptures,  
Small water feature,  
Gravel pathway.

**Other information:** This site is the home of an historic marker describing the Huntsville Springs (plaque erected 1994). It is located just north of downtown.



Sign on park property.

# Gillaspie Park



Passive .258 Acres

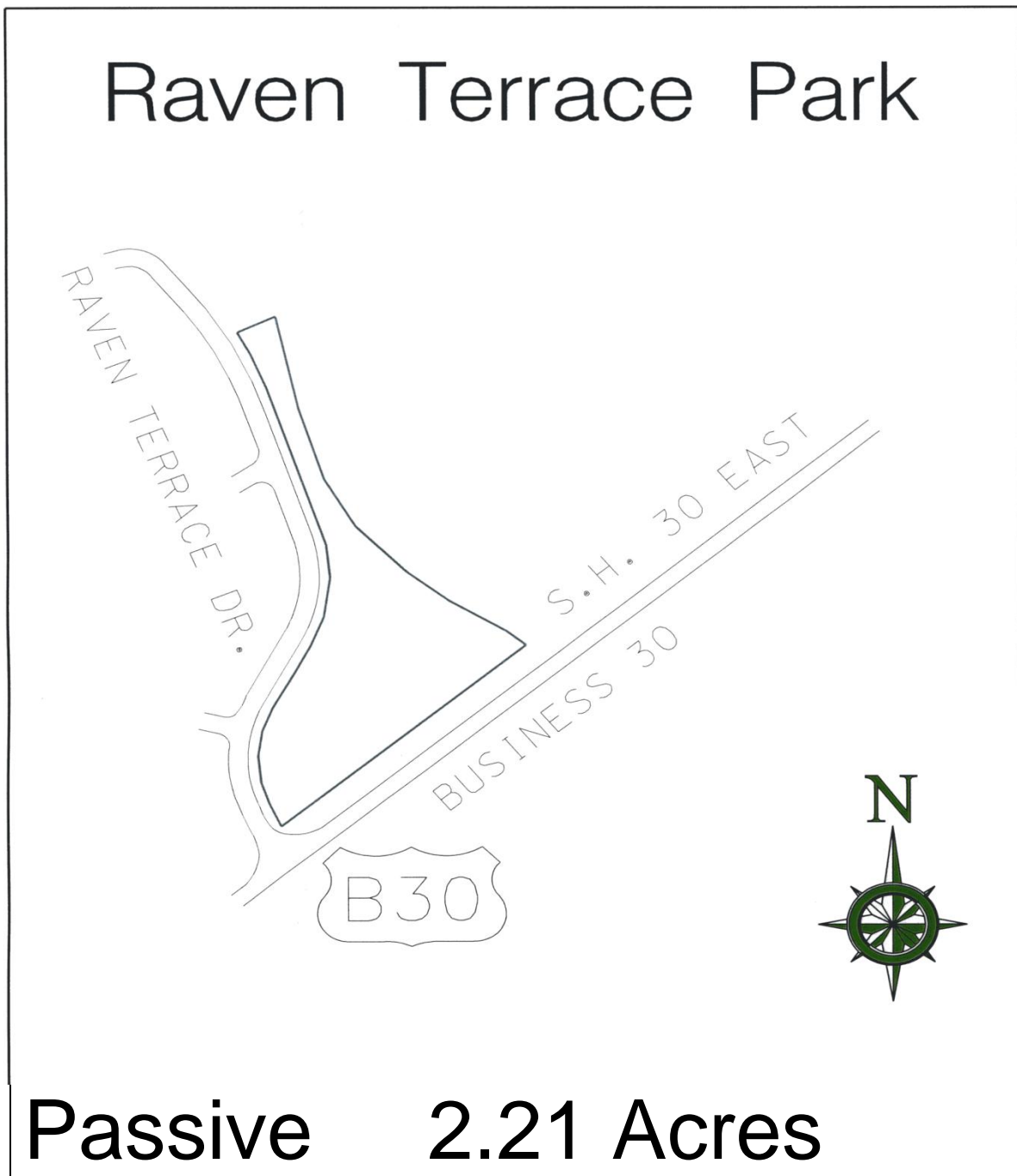




### **GILLASPIE PARK**

- Park Type:** Passive
- Level of Service:** Low/Difficult
- Location:** Avenue I and 9<sup>th</sup> Street.
- Park Size:** .25 acre.
- Acquisition:** Deed dated May 25, 1936 shows a 100' x 100' conveyance with a prohibition against using the property as a cemetery. It was conveyed by W.O.B. Gillaspie in deed recorded in Volume 83, Page 232, DRWCT. After Avenue I was constructed the property became only 50' x 100'. The park was later expanded and platted in 1994 by Huntsville ISD into the present size in Volume 2, Page 178 PRWCT.
- Existing Facilities:** Historical Monument,  
Landscaping and walkways,  
Small bleacher seating.
- Other information:** This park is an obelisk monument to Walker County war dead surrounded by a walkway and landscaping. The property is adjacent on two sides to public streets and on the other two sides is

Huntsville Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2009 Update  
bounded by Huntsville Middle Scholl staff and teacher parking.  
Across Avenue I from the park is the Huntsville Cemetery and the  
grave of Sam Houston.





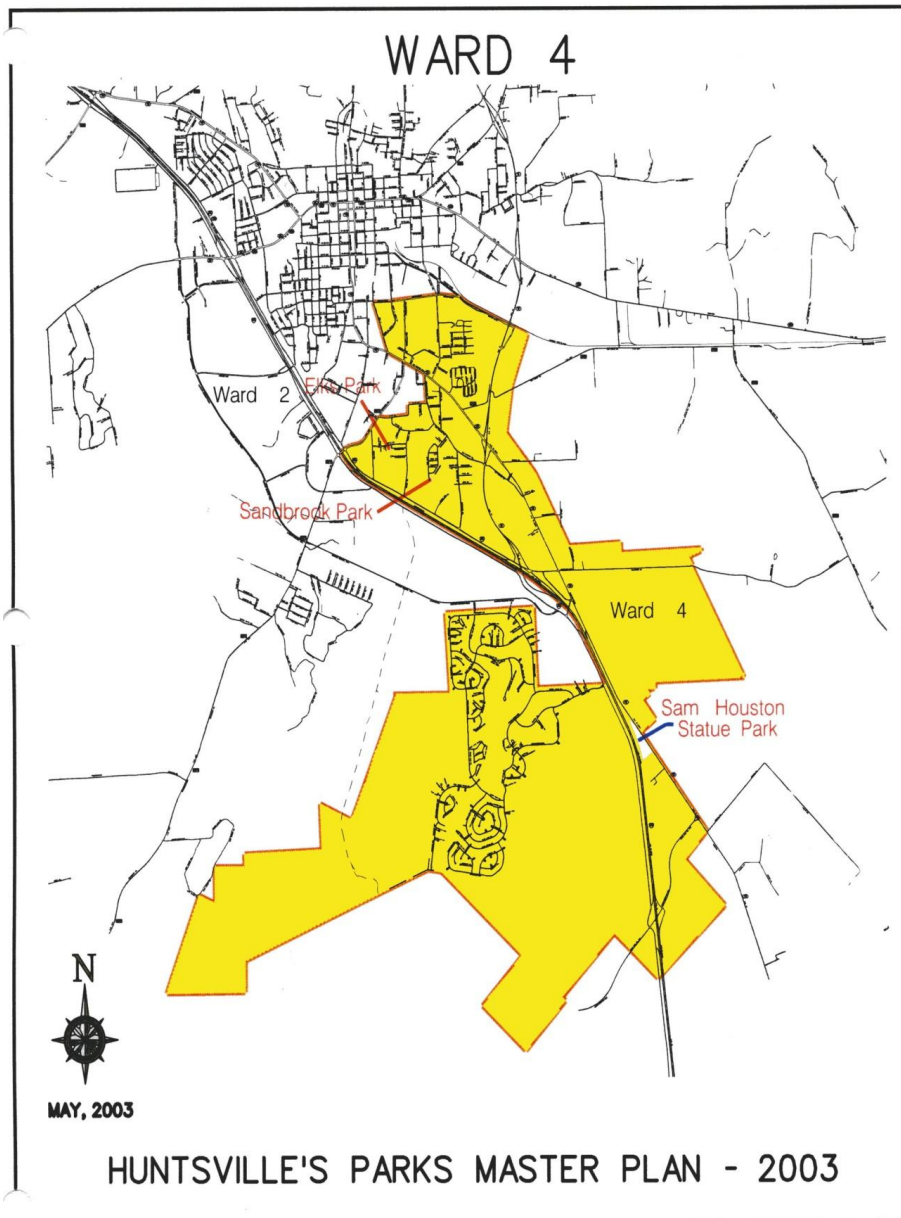
**Raven Terrace:**

**Park Type:** Green Space  
**Level of Service:** Low/Difficult  
**Location:** Next to Raven Terrace Mobile Home Park on Hwy 30 East  
**Park Size:** 2.2 acres dedicated for park and open area drainage area  
**Acquisition:** 2002  
**Existing Facilities:** None.

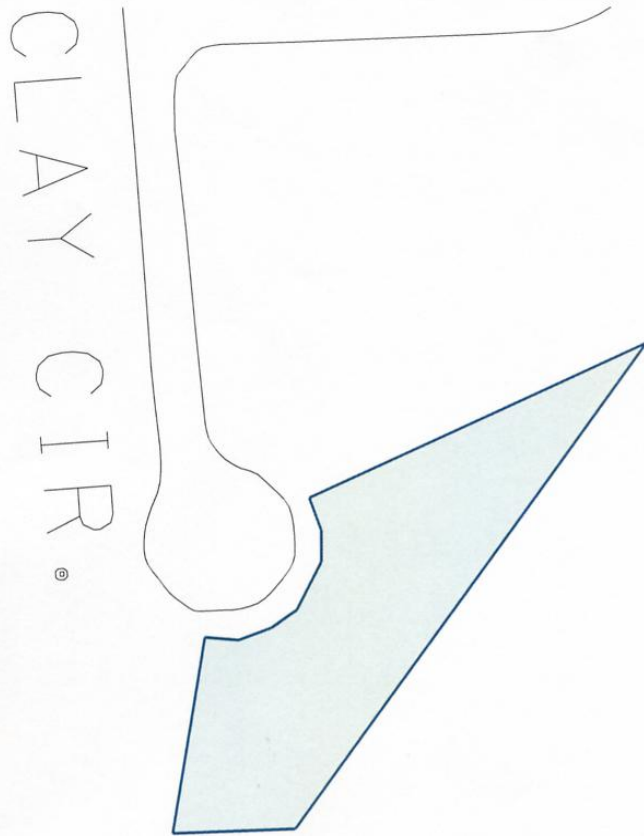


## WARD 4 Parks

<b>Sand-brook</b>
<b>Elks</b>
<b>Total = 1.8</b>



# Sandbrook Park



Neighborhood – 1.60 Acres



### **SANDBROOK PARK**

**Park Type:** Neighborhood

**Level of Service:** Moderate

**Location:** At the south end of Clay Circle in the Sandbrook  
Subdivision Section 3.

**Park Size:** 1.6 acres.

**Acquisition:** By plat of the subdivision in Volume 2, Page 43, PRWCT.

**Existing Facilities:** One two-swing swing set,  
Two spring toys,  
Two picnic tables,  
Cooking grill.

**Other information:** This park is located at the end of a cul-de-sac. The park is nicely maintained with lawn type grasses and a nice setting.

# Elks Park



Passive .27 acres





## ELKS PARK

<b>Park Type:</b>	Green Space
<b>Level of Service:</b>	Low/Difficult
<b>Location:</b>	At the northwest end of Sabrina Lane and the northeast end of Vicki Drive.
<b>Park Size:</b>	0.27 acres dedicated for park and open area; this is split into two separate areas (one 0.093 acres, the other 0.177 acres) divided by Vicky Drive and the McDonald Creek Drainage Easement
<b>Acquisition:</b>	Platted as a re-subdivision of Reserve "A" of Shady Acres Subdivision, Volume 2, Page 24, PRWCT, May 27, 1986; and Reserve "A" and "B" as Elks Park, Volume 2, Page 23, May 17, 1986.
<b>Existing Facilities:</b>	None.
<b>Other information:</b>	This is a combination of two separate areas of green space each bounded on the west by the McDonald Creek drainage easement. Wet often. Difficult to maintain.



## **Miscellaneous Inventory:**

### **Cemeteries:**

Oakwood

Mayes

Addicks

## **Huntsville Independent School District Inventory**

(<http://www.huntsville-isd.org/>)



### **Huntsville High School**

- practice football field
- 4 lighted tennis courts
- 2 unlighted tennis courts
- practice soccer field
- 2 gymnasiums
- soccer field

### **Huntsville Intermediate School**

- Louis G. Davis Gym
- school gymnasium

### **Huntsville Middle School**

- old high school gym in the administrative building
- middle school gymnasium

**Elementary Schools:** Scott, Stewart, Gibbs, Samuel Houston Walker, Huntsville Elementary

- indoor play gymnasiums with adjustable goal backboards

**General:** Environmental Outdoor Learning Centers (Ropes Course)

**Sam Houston State University Inventory**  
(<http://www.shsu.edu>)



- Pritchett Field – walking oval ¼ mile cinder track with multi-purpose field.
- Health & Kinesiology Building with:
  - 4 full sized gymnasiums equipped for volleyball and basketball
  - 10 indoor racquetball courts
  - weight training room
- 8 lighted tennis courts
- 3 intramural ball fields
- 2 outdoor apartment sized pool
- 2 outdoor sand volleyball courts

**8 Priorities and Implementation**

*It should be assumed that all recommendations involving new facilities shall be **Barrier-Free** and ADA compliant.*

**Additionally, all priorities were made within the following guidelines:**

- Sponsor performance on active grant projects and compliance at previously assisted grant sites;
- To recognize and reward local planning;
- To promote the conservation of natural resources and open space through park and recreational land acquisition, preservation, and environmentally sensitive planning and development;
- To provide a more balanced mix and wider variety of park and recreation opportunities;
- To provide a better geographic distribution of park and recreation opportunities;
- To provide water-related park and recreation opportunities where feasible;

- To maximize the use of funds for basic park and recreation opportunities;
- To provide improved park and recreation opportunities for low income, minority, elderly and/or youth-at-risk citizens;
- To improve cooperative efforts between park and recreation providers and other governmental and/or educational entities, and the private sector;
- To provide for the renovation of existing, obsolete public park and recreation areas and facilities;
- To provide greenbelt, linear linkages to other parks, neighborhoods or public facilities;
- To encourage the appreciation and preservation of cultural resources.

Source: Texas Parks and Wildlife  
Department.

## **a Priorities and Recommendations**

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan was designed to solicit substantial public input and combine that input with the expertise and experience of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and staff of the City of Huntsville. The 8 public meetings and the formation of an “All-star” team of citizens in 2003 accomplished that goal. The All-star group consisted of about 8 members and met at least 5 times during the planning process. The meetings were extremely valuable and productive. The 4 public meetings held in 2009 reinforced the commitment by the Advisory Board, citizens and staff to improve and expand the recreation opportunities for Huntsville.

The “All-star” group was originated to garner citizen input from the grass roots level and from a variety of interests. The information compiled in these meetings formulated an early “priority list”. This list was forwarded to the Advisory Board for further discussion and action. The priority list was designed to separate the priorities into appropriate categories. A similar approach was used in the last master plan and has proven to be a valuable way to properly address the needs and concerns in their respective areas, while not compressing all priorities into one general list. The priorities are listed below in rank form and a narrative of each priority is provided below.

The priorities were divided into 4 different categories based on funding source.

### **Category 1: Grant Funded Issues (2009 Update)**

- 1 Trail and Park Linkage
- 2 Land Acquisition for Multi-Sport Complex
- 3 Skate Park
- 4 Additional Soccer field lights

- 5 Competition Pool Cover
- 6 Solar Heating for Pool
- 7 Property Acquisitions for Neighborhood Parks
- 8 Eastham-Thomason Park Trail Improvements

**Category 2: City of Huntsville – Budgeted/Operational items (2009 Update)**

- 1 Renovate Kate Barr Ross Park by Adding More Sports Fields
- 2 Additional Concession/Restroom at Kate Barr Ross Park
- 3 Renovate Existing Concession/Restroom at Kate Barr Ross Park
- 4 Landfill Practice Field (spread dirt to level playing area)
- 5 Additional Restroom Facilities at Existing Parks
- 6 Safety Signs for Bicyclists
- 7 Outsource New Master Plan by 2013

**Category 3: Bond Issues (2009 Update)**

- 1 Multi-Sport Complex
- 2 Indoor Pool Facility
- 3 Indoor Recreation Facility
- 4 Girls Softball Complex

**Category 4: Non-Funded Issues (2009 Update)**

- 1 Trails Master Plan
- 2 HISD Sports Facilities on HISD Property
- 3 Access to Field 4 from HISD
- 4 Additional Park Features for Existing Parks
- 5 Existing Park Beautification

*Narrative:*\_\_\_\_\_

**Category 1 - Grant Related Issues                      Eastham-Thomason  
(COMPLETED 2007)**

The “Grants Related Issues” category represents items that have been or still need to be accomplished pending successful grant application processes. The projects listed below are dependent on grant funding, however it is possible to proceed with the priority albeit in a scaled down and/or delayed version should no grant money be made available. Grant funding has always been difficult to secure and with the State’s budget crisis the likelihood of securing grant funding for any of the following priorities is questionable. But, thanks to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, we have accomplished several of the priorities of the 2003 Master Plan.

*Here’s why:*

**Texas Parks and Wildlife Department**

([www.tpwd.gov](http://www.tpwd.gov)) may or may not have grant funding for this year's successful applicants. TPW may choose to award fewer fully funded grants or may award more, yet smaller sized awards, or may not make *any* awards. Officials at TPW have estimated that the entire grants budget may evaporate to the needs of other State Departments and don't expect to see those monies returned for several years. They will not know for certain until the 2003 legislative session ends sometime in June of this year. This means that we may not get funding regardless of how *good* our Master Plan and grant application.

**1-1 Aquatic Center: (COMPLETED 2007)**

A swimming pool should be built at the former SW Bell site on Avenue N. Because of its numerous features and location this site has been identified as the most likely to be awarded a TPW \$500,000 Outdoor Recreation Grant.

**1-2 Bath house: (COMPLETED 2007)**

The former SW Bell building should be renovated into a useable ADA compliant bath house. It would possess male and female shower and restrooms, several smaller rooms for an office. The building would house a small snack-bar. The snack-bar would be equipped with a refrigerator, blender, counters, sinks, microwave oven and a small toaster. The kitchen shall operate a concession booth within the building providing light snacks, sodas, sandwiches, pizza slices, candies and etc at a modest price.

The small rooms could be used by area non-profits such as YMCA, Boys and Girls Club, HEAP, and etc. An office for a manager should be included.

The renovation process of the bathhouse should be achieved over the planning horizon (5 years). A list of "must-haves" such as furnishings and build-out should be developed and used as a starting point for budget determination.





Former SW Bell building (future bath-house)

### 1-3 **Property acquisition: (COMPLETED 2007)**

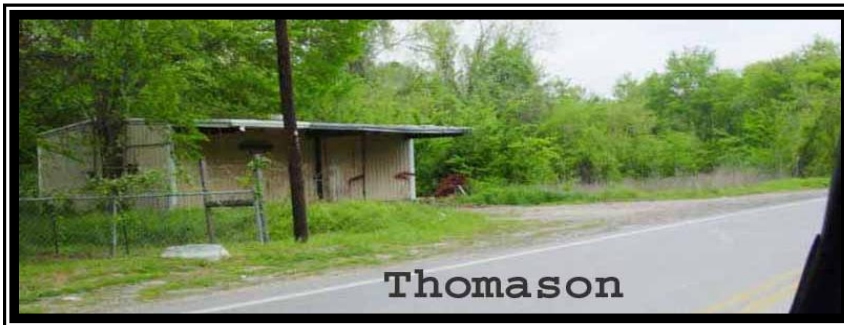
Property must be acquired adjacent to Eastham-Thomason. Three lots have been identified that meet the strict requirements of the TPW Outdoor grant application. The three lots have a combined area of XX acres. One is a residential lot and the other two are commercial. These lots provide the needed extra space to make the entire project function successfully.

The three lots are identified as follows:

Name	Sq ft.	Appraised value	“Asking” price
Rolling		\$21,460	\$31,500
Spivey		\$18,840	\$60,000
Thomason		\$7850	minimal



Rolling



1-4 **Nature Center:** (COMPLETED 2007)

A nature/education center should be established in Eastham-Thomason Park. The site should be located near the crest of the hill on 7<sup>th</sup> street. It should be linked to other parks and greenbelts by a centralized trail system. The building would be positioned close to the street (to minimize the impact on the forest), provide for ADA parking areas and preserve the old homestead located further up the hill. A small building (500-900 sf) could provide an adequate resource for providing educational opportunities and information to children and adults alike.

Rising out of this unique building should be a 50 foot observation platform. The platform would be tall enough to allow for outstanding vistas over the tops of the trees. This deck will provide a 360 degree view of the surrounding park land and an **amazing** view of the city.

This platform shall be the first of a series of three platforms. The other platform locations could be the “Blue Lagoon” (6 miles north) and the Huntsville State Park (7 miles to the south). This trail system, otherwise known as the “Huntsview Trail” and the vistas from three platforms will allow Huntsville to proudly showcase to the world our most powerful resource – the stunning natural beauty.



(Concept rendering)

(kobs)



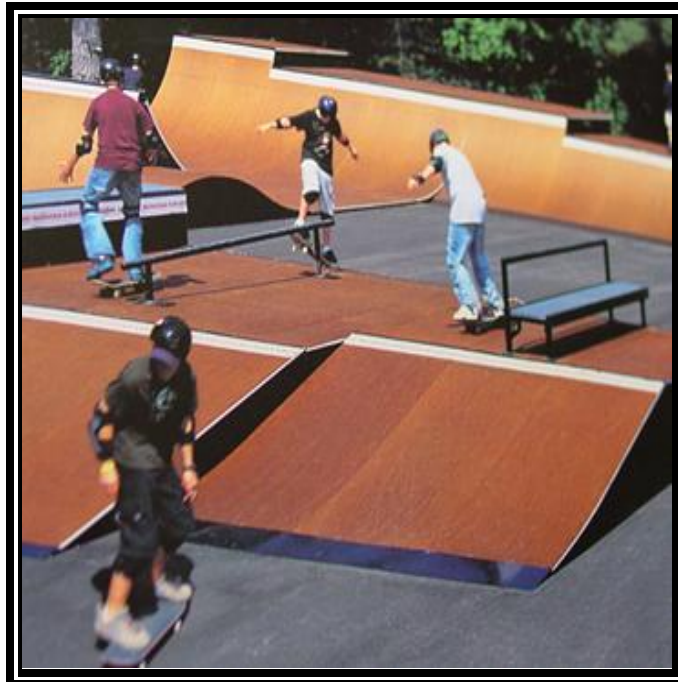
Views from 80 feet above the ground at projected location:





**1-5 Skate Park:**

A skate park should be built in Eastham-Thomason. Skateboarding, inline skating and biking are tremendously popular. Teenagers are particularly interested in and use these types of parks. Skate park enthusiasts should be involved in the design of this project. A subcommittee should be formed to oversee the design, layout, construction, installation and maintenance of the skate park. This would be a tremendous opportunity to directly involve the young people of the City to contribute and therefore take pride in establishing a skate park.

**1-6 Pooch Park: (COMPLETED 2008)**

A pooch park should be built in Eastham-Thomason Park. A pooch, or dog-park, has received a surprisingly large amount of support and interest. A pooch park is a low cost and effective method of fostering a sense of community through shared interests. Pooch parks are relatively small, possess a few trees and require minimal maintenance. These parks have a low start-up cost and require basic chain link fencing. Users are legally responsible for cleaning up after their dog at all times. No cruel, sick or notoriously vicious dogs will be allowed. Dogs would be able to run off-leash while in the area of the Pooch Park only. Minimal space, materials, and costs are needed to make a pooch park successful.



**1-7 Greenbelt Linkage:**

The trail systems of Huntsville should be improved and interconnect. There exist numerous trails of varying lengths and types in the City today. However, few of them connect to other trails or provide for a cohesive system. Trails are often located near low lying and often wet areas. Preserving and establishing trails should coordinate with protecting waterways, greenbelts and other natural features.

A lack of sidewalks, bike-lanes and virtually no public transportation place tremendous constraints on the mobility of Huntsville's residents. Trails and sidewalks are ways to provide for the needs of the non-motorized travelers.

The Huntsview Trail should be established. Total completion for this project would probably extend beyond the planning horizon. The completed trail will be 14 miles that will connect and showcase the stunning natural beauty of Huntsville and the surrounding areas. The trail would be ideal for hikers, bikers, runners, racers, walkers, bi and tri-athalons, cross country, nature lovers, and others.

With three observation platforms connected to a 14 mile trail, the Huntsview Trail would be unparalleled throughout the nation. The unique trail and stunning vistas would attract tourists and visitors to the city.

**1-8 Seating: (COMPLETED 2007)**

The amount of seating needs to be increased. The soccer area attracts many players and observers, yet has no seating available. Bleachers and picnic tables should be installed. Park visitors should be able to access seating easily.

Regarding previous 8 priorities for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department \$500,000 Outdoor Recreation grant:

	Specific goal # 1A	Obtain detailed cost estimates including operation and maintenance.
Specific goal # 1B		Complete TPW Outdoor Recreation application.
Specific goal # 1C		Obtain City Council adoption.
Specific goal # 1D		Submit grant application to TPW.
Specific goal # 1E		Facilitate any additional information needed by TPW.
Specific goal # 1F		Receive "Notification of Award".
Specific goal # 1G		Begin implementation process.
Specific goal # 1H		Review and revise.

## **Category 2 – City of Huntsville Budgeted/Operational**

This category represents items that will be addressed in the normal operations and yearly budget for the Parks and Recreation Department. This category represents a priority should the Texas Parks and Recreation Department's Outdoor Recreation grant is not awarded to the City of Huntsville.

### **2-1 Aquatic Center: (COMPLETED 2007)**

The City should build an Aquatic Center. The City currently has \$500,000 designated as "match" money for a pool. Ideally, the City would prefer to use the money as a match in a successful grant application with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's \$500,000 award. Should the City not receive the grant the \$500,000 should be used to address the needs of swimmers and build a new pool (s).

Specific goal # 2-1A	Submit TPW \$500,000 Outdoor Recreation grant application.
Specific goal # 2-1B	Close the pool at Kate Barr Ross by October 1, 2003 per TNRCC laws.
Specific goal # 2-1C	Receive TPW award. (See: Category 3 Grants) or,
Specific goal # 2-1D	Seek City Council approval to use the \$500,000 to construct an Aquatic Center at Eastham-Thomason Park.
Specific goal # 2-1E	Solicit and collect "In-Kind" and monetary donations from local supporters public and private.
Specific goal # 2-1F	City shall negotiate an access schedule that revolves around the needs of the general public.
Specific goal # 2-1G	Review and accept a plan concept.
Specific goal # 2-1H	Obtain detailed cost estimates.
Specific goal # 2-1I	Secure contracts.
Specific goal # 2-1J	Begin construction.
Specific goal # 2-1K	Complete construction.
Specific goal # 2-1L	Inform public.
Specific goal # 2-1M	Open Aquatic Center to the people of Huntsville.

### **2 -2 Improvements at Emancipation Park: (COMPLETED 2004-2006)**

The pavilion, restrooms and floor should be improved. The structure itself is sound and money has been allocated to install a new floor in the pavilion. As much as that will help it will not solve the current structural problems there. The building needs to

have the roof line extended to provide rain and sun relief. The current roof allows for excessive amounts of rain to fall on the floor. A longer extended roof line will provide the necessary shelter to keep the rain off of the floor during all but the most severe rain storms. In addition, a longer extended roof will provide much needed shade around the building. The bathrooms have been scheduled for demolition and reconstruction. Some of the open space needs minor dirt-work.

Many people commented about enclosing the pavilion at Emancipation Park. Upon further discussion and review, it was determined that enclosure was impractical. (*See Appendix: Emancipation Park*)

Specific goal # 2-2A	Review and accept a concept or plan for roof modifications.
Specific goal # 2-2B	Obtain detailed cost estimates for roof.
Specific goal # 2-2C	Secure contracts.
Specific goal # 2-2D	Begin construction of new restroom facilities.
Specific goal # 2-2E	Begin re-construction of pavilion floor.
Specific goal # 2-2F	Begin construction of roof work.
Specific goal # 2-2G	Complete restroom construction.
Specific goal # 2-2H	Complete floor construction.
Specific goal # 2-2I	Complete roof construction.
Specific goal # 2-2J	Inform public.
Specific goal # 2-2K	Re-open the Pavilion to the people of Huntsville.

## 2 -3 **Skate Park:**

A skate park should be built in the City. A location that surfaced many times was Eastham Thomason Park near the play modules. Numerous people presented information and examples about skate parks. Two approaches exist to establish a skate park. The first being that the City purchase and install pre-made “events” (jumps, ramps etc) from nationally recognized companies. This would cost about \$50,000 - \$60,000. The second approach involves the coordination of the City and HISD and/or Gulf Coast Trades to construct the events locally based on purchased nationally Recognized designs. This approach would cost about \$10,000 - \$20,000 and would be a tremendous way to directly involve the young people of the City to contribute and therefore take pride in establishing a skate park.

Specific goal # 2-3A	Determine a budget.
Specific goal # 2-3B	Determine a suitable location.
Specific goal # 2-3C	Obtain detailed cost estimates.
Specific goal # 2-3D	Establish a sub-committee of area skate enthusiasts to perform design function within budget.
Specific goal # 2-3E	Coordinate with HISD, Gulf Coast Trades, TDCJ for construction of events.
Specific goal # 2-3F	Finalize plans.
Specific goal # 2-3G	Purchase nationally Recognized event blueprints.

Specific goal # 2-3H	Begin construction of pad site.
Specific goal # 2-3I	Begin construction of events.
Specific goal # 2-3J	Complete construction of pad site.
Specific goal # 2-3K	Complete construction of events.
Specific goal # 2-3L	Install events at site.
Specific goal # 2-3M	Inform the public.
Specific goal # 2-3N	Open Skate Park to the people of Huntsville.
Specific goal # 2-3O	Review and evaluate process.

## 2 -4 **Castle Park:**

The Parks and Recreation should re-establish a park similar to Castle Park of yesteryear. Much interest has been received to re-establish a park feature such as the ship or fort at the former Castle Park. Many people have voiced concern that while the play modules such as those at Eastham –Thomason and Emancipation Park are valuable - a need for a unique type of play feature that would encourage the creativity and playfulness of young minds was repeatedly advocated and agreed upon.

The public should be highly encouraged to submit ideas/drawings to the Advisory Board at the appropriate time. One key goal in attaining this priority is that the “concept”, whatever this will become, be entirely of local resources. In other words, designed and built here in Huntsville and not “imported.” (This priority could be a lot of fun.)

Specific goal # 2-4A	Accept public input.
Specific goal # 2-4B	Select a concept.
Specific goal # 2-4C	Determine location
Specific goal # 2-4D	Allocate appropriate funds for the project.
Specific goal # 2-4E	Finalize plans and obtain detailed cost estimates.
Specific goal # 2-4F	Begin construction.
Specific goal # 2-4G	Finalize construction.
Specific goal # 2-4H	Inform public.
Specific goal # 2-4 I	Open “Castle Park” to the people of Huntsville.

## **Category 3 Bond Related Issues**

These are items that would require a public bond vote.

- Indoor Recreation Center
- Multi-Plex (sport fields) Update: Field 10 was completed in 2008

## **Category 4 - Non-funding Issues**

This category identifies items that involve little or no cost to the City. The items

in this category can be achieved somewhat easily with only minor expenditures. These items may involve City staff functions, the coordination of different City Departments and/or the coordination of Gulf Coast Trades, TDCJ, the Sheriff's Department\* and volunteer groups to reach certain goals.

\* The City of Huntsville has 2 state licensed Sheriff's deputies and can supervise Sheriff Department inmate work crews.

**4-1 Practice Fields: (COMPLETED 2004, FIELDS WERE USED TEMPORARILTY)**

The City Landfill should be configured to provide numerous practice fields. The need for more sports practice fields is quite clear. Practice fields differ from game fields in their lower level of overall quality and amenities. Many sports groups from baseball to soccer and everyone in between needs practice fields. Practice fields allow the various sports teams to conserve "game-fields" for games. This will reduce the wear and tear on those fields and the related costs of manpower in maintaining those fields in game-ready conditions continuously. Closed and "capped" in 1994, the City landfill is an ideal location for practice and possibly game fields. Its size of 127 acres and relatively smooth surface will provide space for dozens of fields of all types. The landfill has certain legal and environmental constraints, yet is safe for everyday use. (*See Appendix: Landfill*)

Specific goal # 4-1A	City shall secure perimeter fencing and protection of sensitive landfill areas.
Specific goal # 4-1B	City shall install proper and informative signage.
Specific goal # 4-1C	City shall inform the public of available space and responsibilities and produce a schedule.
Specific goal #4-1D	Users will be responsible for the equipping basic maintenance of their respective field.
Specific goal # 4-1E	City shall restrict the use of game fields at Kate Barr Ross during bad weather and/or maintenance.





The Landfill

#### 4-2 **Development Code / Planning and Zoning:**

The Development code should be revised. The code should more accurately reflect the Parks and Recreation Department's ability to sustainably deliver increased quantity and quality of services and facilities into the future. The target date for revised Development Code changes is July of 2003. The first of the two notable changes will address the various aspects of park-land dedication. The second will address the relationship and communications between the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and the Planning and Zoning commission.

Specific goal # 4-2A	City staff shall begin revision process immediately.
Specific goal # 4-2B	City shall provide draft version by mid-July, 2003.
Specific goal # 4-2C	Public shall provide input on revisions.
Specific goal # 4-2D	City Council adoption by November of 2003.

#### 4-3 **Trails:**

The trail systems of Huntsville should be improved. There exist numerous trails of varying lengths and types in the City today. However, few of them connect to other trails or provide for a cohesive system. Trails are often located near low lying and often wet areas. Preserving and establishing trails should coordinate with protecting waterways, greenbelts and other natural features.

The Huntsview Trail should be established. This will be a 17 mile trail that will connect and showcase the stunning natural beauty of Huntsville and the surrounding areas. The trail would be composed of 3 main focal points:

- 1 A location 6 miles north of Huntsville
- 2 Eastham-Thomason park in the center of Huntsville
- 3 The Huntsville State park 7 miles to the south of Huntsville

- Specific goal # 4-3A Identify existing trails and possible points of linkage.
- Specific goal # 4-3B Connect nearby trails
- Specific goal # 4-3C Seek grants to fund trail acquisitions and proper signage.
- Specific goal # 4-3D Secure access easement(s) to establish the southern portion of the Huntsview trail.
- Specific goal # 4-3E Connect Eastham-Thomason to area trails.
- Specific goal # 4-3F Secure lease or donation from Gibbs for the “Blue Lagoon”.
- Specific goal # 4-3G Establish working agreement with Gulf Coast Trades for under-brushing of numerous trails and parks.

#### 4-4 **Nature Center: (COMPLETED 2007)**

A nature/education center could be established somewhere in the City with preference given to the E-T Park area. A small building (500-900 sf) could provide an adequate resource for providing educational opportunities and information to children and adults alike.

- Specific goal # 4-4A Determine a budget.
- Specific goal # 4-4B Determine an environmentally sustainable building and location.
- Specific goal # 4-4C Coordinate with HISD’s educational interests.
- Specific goal # 4-4D Obtain detailed cost estimates.
- Specific goal # 4-4E Approve plans and expenditures.
- Specific goal # 4-4F Begin construction.
- Specific goal # 4-4G Complete construction.
- Specific goal # 4-4H Open Nature Center to the people of Huntsville.

#### 4-5 **“Pooch park”:** (COMPLETED 2008)

A pooch park should be built in Eastham-Thomason Park. A pooch, or dog-park, has received a surprisingly large amount of support and interest. A pooch park is a low cost and effective method of fostering a sense of community through shared interests. Pooch parks are relatively small, possess a few trees and require minimal maintenance. These parks have a low start-up cost and require basic chain link fencing. Users are legally responsible for cleaning up after their dog at all times. No cruel, sick or notoriously vicious dogs will be allowed. Dogs would be able to run off-leash while in the area of the Pooch Park only. A possible location is E-T Park. Minimal space, materials, and costs are needed to make a pooch park successful.

- Specific goal # 4-5A Determine a budget.
- Specific goal # 4-5B Determine a size and location.
- Specific goal # 4-5C Finalize plans and obtain detailed cost estimates.
- Specific goal # 4-5D Begin construction.
- Specific goal # 4-5E Finalize construction.
- Specific goal # 4-5F Inform public.
- Specific goal # 4-5G Open Pooch Park to the people of Huntsville.

#### 4-6 **Public Art:**

J H Rather Park should be designated a “Public Art” park. Public art can be described as art that is designed and built to be placed outdoors. The intent of public art is to decorate public areas such as parks, medians, right of ways, fields, etc. The interest in public art was the biggest surprise of the Master Plan process.

SHSU has an art Department and has expressed sincere interest in developing public art through its art students. The cost for public art can range from nothing to millions of dollars, however it is quite possible that works can be commissioned/subsidized with the University student for as little as a few thousand dollars.

A public art co-operation would mutually benefit the University and the City. Students would have a “venue” for their work and the people of the City can enjoy the art. Given time, this sort of co-operation will develop, mature and become more productive and valuable. It also assists in connecting the City and the University in a demonstrative way. All pieces would need SHSU and Advisory Board approval prior to placement and would be subject to replacement on a rotating basis.

- Specific goal # 4-6A Determine a budget.
- Specific goal # 4-6B Establish working relationship with SHSU art Department.
- Specific goal # 4-6C “Audition” and select “concept” for commissioning process.

Specific goal # 4-6D	Fund project.
Specific goal # 4-6E	Approve final public art piece.
Specific goal # 4-6F	Install art piece.
Specific goal # 4-6G	Inform the public.
Specific goal # 4-6H	Review, evaluate and repeat process.

4-7 **“Nike’s Reuse-a-shoe”:** (PROGRAM CANCELLED BY NIKE)

The City has already begun this Nike sponsored grant program. The grant provides for a free rubber resurfacing of a public court. Should the City be awarded this grant it should be applied to the completion of the skate park at Eastham-Thomason as mentioned earlier.

Specific goal # 4-7A	Continue collecting used shoes for the project.
Specific goal # 4-7B	Submit grant application.
Specific goal # 4-7C	Receive “Notification of Award”.
Specific goal # 4-7D	Coordinate award with pad site at skate park in E-T Park.
Specific goal # 4-7E	Review and revise.

**b Implementation Phase**

begins on next page

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[illegible]

	2003							2004							2005				2006				2007				
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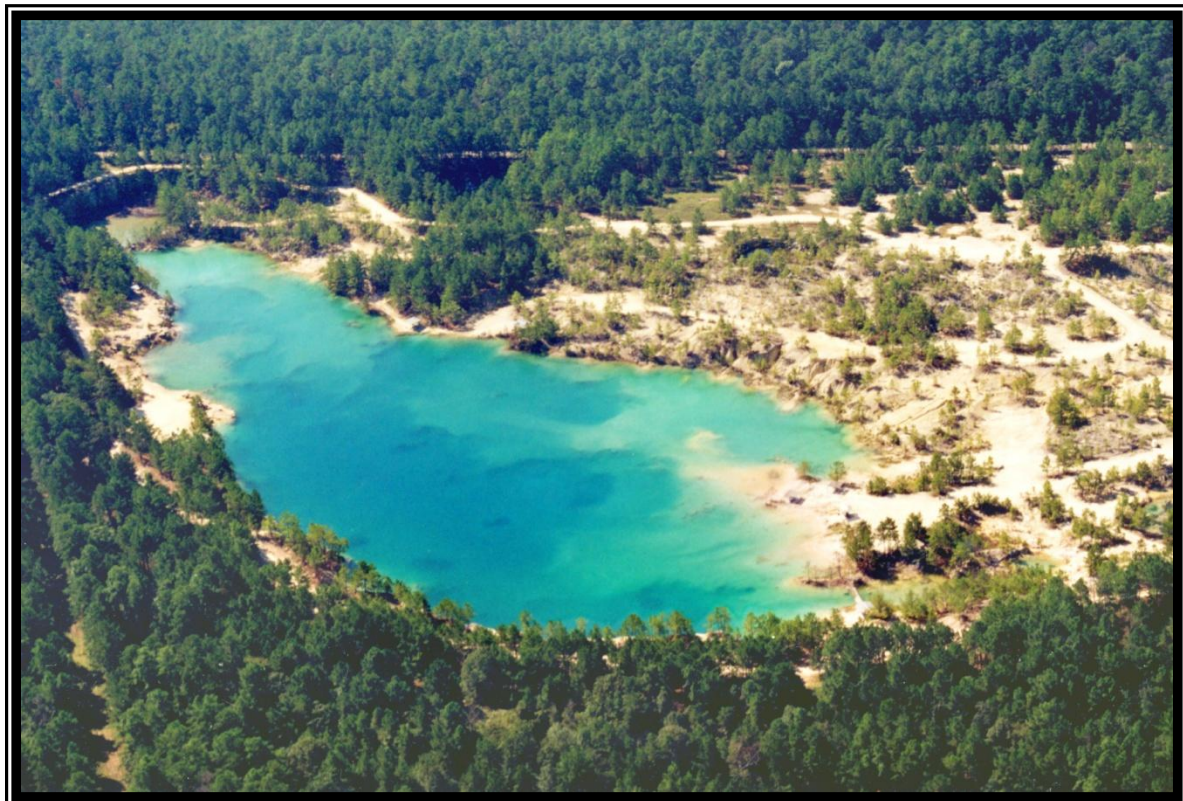


## 9 Conclusions

### a Long term Recommendations

Long-term recommendations:

- Indoor Recreation Center located in a central area.
- Multi-Sport Complex area.
- Property purchases
- Donation or Lease acquisition of the “Blue Lagoon”
- All structures built shall comply with nationalized standards for “Green” or; environmentally responsible construction methods and materials such as those described by the Texas Veterans Land Board, and/or the Department of Energy.



## **b Process Recommendations**

The process of “creating” the Master Plan was somewhat new to the city. Goals were identified and ways to achieve those goals were determined. The extensive public comment and “All-star” group was invaluable in the process and thus, in the creation of this document. The Advisory Board should be commended for their work, dedication and out-reach to the public. They managed to identify goals and methods while staying true to their responsibility of meeting the needs of all people of Huntsville.

The process for this plan produced a document *of* the people. The process should be expanded into other challenges faced by the City of Huntsville in various departments.

## **c Closing Remarks.**

Key Points of this Master Plan:

- Submit the updated Parks and Recreation Master Plan to the Texas Department of Parks and Wildlife in order to be considered for upcoming grants
- **Repairs to Emancipation Park’s pavilion.** (COMPLETED)
- **User fee Analysis** (COMPLETED)
- Determination of “costs per acre”
- **Close the pool of Kate Barr Ross** (COMPLETED)
- Insufficient acreage of Neighborhood parks
- Sufficient budget to accomplish the goals identified within this document (and others to come)

There exist an endless number of issues to consider in long range planning of the Parks and Recreation Department. Planning for and administering future facilities and programs will present constant challenges for the department into the future. Perhaps no challenge will be more acute than that of the operating budget. To obtain the challenges in this Plan, as well as those of plans to come, will require an appropriate budget. Anything less than a proper budget will cause an accelerated decline in the quality and quantity of the Parks and Recreation services long into the future.

Several parks and programs of the City are already exhibiting signs of impending demise. Basic maintenance issues have fallen by the wayside in order to accommodate rising costs in other areas of the Department. Continued at this pace, the parks of 2010 will consist of roughly 5 high quality parks and 23 +/- parks of poor quality and aged facilities.

The time to plan for the future is now. The Parks and Recreation Department must be properly funded and staffed in order to achieve the quality of parks and



Huntsville Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2009 Update  
recreational services as detailed by City Council. Under-funded, the Department will not  
be able to achieve its goals.

The Citizens of Huntsville want quality parks, services and facilities now and into  
the future.

Every City  
Should Have  
at its Heart,  
a Great Park